

THE
CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

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ON THE CHARACTER OF WAKEFIELD'S TRANSLATION OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

UPON taking up Wakefield's Translation of the New Testament, one naturally and reasonably expects to find, from the well known character of the author, much learning skilfully employed, much ingenuity boldly exercised, and some whimsicality occasionally indulged. The critical reader will not be disappointed in either of these expectations. He will find abundant proofs of uncommon acquisitions in useful learning, many instances of a happy exercise of ingenuity, and some blemishes arising from the precipitancy, and want of patient reflection, which were peculiarly characteristic of this eminent man. As we are to form our judgment, however, of the value of his work, not from individual examples of successful or of erroneous translation, but from the general principles by which he was guided, "*non nāvo aliquo aut crepundiis, sed corpore omni,*" I shall remark upon some of those decided faults and striking improvements, which are found to occur frequently, and which give a general character to his work.

1. The first peculiarity, which I shall mention, is a fault which, though productive of no very important consequences, is found in every part of his translation; viz. the caprice with which he has rendered, sometimes with the definite, and sometimes with the indefinite Article, words which have none in the Greek. His general practice is, to render words without the Article in Greek, with the indefinite English Article; but the plain meaning of the sacred writer has sometimes compelled him to deviate from it, and he has often translated otherwise

without any apparent reason. An instance occurs of the omission of the Article in Matt. iv. 3. *εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τῷ Θεῷ*, which Wakefield renders, "As thou art *a* son of God," notwithstanding the frequency with which Jesus is spoken of as the son of God in a high and peculiar sense, and notwithstanding also, that he has elsewhere rendered the same phrase more definitely, as Mark i. 1. "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, *the* son of God," *υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ*. Luke i. 35. is rendered by Wakefield, "A holy spirit will come upon thee, and *a* power of the most high God will overshadow thee, and therefore thine offspring will be holy, and *a* son of God." Now as *a* holy spirit, and *a* power of the most high God can mean only the divine omnipotence, the expressions should be such as not to imply the existence of more than one almighty power; which can be effected only by using the English definite Article.—The translating of *υἱὸς Θεοῦ* in this instance by, *a* son of God, produces, as Middleton* has observed, a downright anti-climax. *A* son of God must be understood to mean, a holy man, and the angel is made to declare to Mary, "the power of the most high God will overshadow thee, and therefore thine offspring shall be called *a* holy man." It seems clear, that *υἱὸς Θεοῦ* must here be understood in the peculiar sense in which the title was given to our Saviour.

Upon the same principle by which he renders *δυναμις ὑψίστου*, *a* power of the most High, why should he not translate *χεὶρ κυρίου* in the 66th verse of the same chapter, *a* hand of the Lord, and *Χριστὸς κύριος* in the 11th verse of the next, Christ *a* Lord? But in both these instances he has used *the*. The want of consistency in his rendering of the same phrase, under similar circumstances, leads one to suspect, that he had not bestowed sufficient attention upon the subject to ascertain the correct principles of the interpretation of the Greek Article, or to determine upon any uniform system. This irregularity is found in every part of his work; thus I open upon Romans, 1st chap. and I find in 1st verse, *εἰς εὐαγγέλιον Θεοῦ*, translated, "for *the* Gospel of God; in verse 4th *τῷ ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ Θεοῦ*, "proved to be *a* son of God," *κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιοσύνης*, "by *the* holy spirit," *ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν*, "by *a* miraculous resurrection from the dead."—Here are four instances of the omission of the Article in the Greek, and Wakefield has alternately rendered by the English definite and indefinite, seemingly without authority or system. But it is needless to multiply examples of an inconsistency which is obvious to every scholar.

* Middleton on the Greek Article, Part II. p. 297.

2. Another peculiarity, which I think must be considered a fault, is the great weight which he ascribes to the authority of the ancient Eastern Versions. Of the *Æthiopic*, in particular, he seems to have had an extravagantly high opinion. He calls it in one place (note upon Acts xvi. 19.) "that most valuable of Versions;" in another (note upon Acts v. 3.) he says, "the *Æthiopic* translator has often preserved genuine words, corrupted in all our MSS." and again (on 2 Tim. iii. 16.) "The single testimony of the *Æthiopic* is with me, I own, equivalent to all the rest of the old versions in a difficult or disputed passage." He speaks of the Coptic also in terms of high commendation, calling it, "that most accurate version." (on Matt. xx. 16.) He says of the Syriac and *Æthiopic*, (on Acts xiii. 48.) that "they preserve more genuine readings, that seem to have been long supplanted, than any other."

But the best proof which can be given of the estimation in which he held them, will be found in the frequency with which he adopts their readings. The union of two or three of these versions rarely fails to prove decisive with him; and I have observed, that in thirty-seven instances, he follows the *Æthiopic*, entirely unsupported either by MSS. or other versions; and under similar circumstances he follows the Syriac in nine, the Arabic in five, and the Coptic in four instances; and very probably several have escaped my notice.

Now whatever may be the critical value of these versions, and they certainly stand very high, it is plain that *no single authority*, whether MS. or version, can be of sufficient importance to justify a translator in often adopting its readings unsupported. If the exigence of a passage be imperative for the reading of a valuable individual version, he might perhaps be allowed to follow it alone; but never to adopt its readings merely because he thinks them in some degree preferable. But this seems to have been frequently done by Wakefield.

It is easier to account for this undue appreciation of the Eastern versions, than entirely to justify it. We learn from a passage in his Memoirs,* that he had acquired a knowledge of the Hebrew, and its kindred languages the Syriac and Chaldee, of the *Æthiopic*, Arabic, Persic, and lastly, of the Coptic. He even made some improvements in the lexicon and grammar of the latter language. Of the versions of the New Testament in these several tongues, he made great and constant use when preparing his translation. He naturally set a high value upon a branch of knowledge which he possessed in a very superior

* Volume 1. p. 236.

degree, and he availed himself with great care and accuracy of those sources of information which were not equally accessible to others.* He has frequently corrected the erroneous quotations of Wetstein and Griesbach, sometimes with an amusing expression of contempt for their ignorance, or of abuse for their inaccuracy, and I have found not fewer than ninety instances, in which he has given a various reading, from some one or more of the Eastern versions, which Griesbach has omitted. This is certainly highly honorable to his fidelity and accuracy; and it may be said, in palliation of his offence, that many of the cases, in which he follows these valuable versions in preference to the majority of MSS., are instances of his omitting those apparent interpolations either from other parts of the New Testament, or from the invention of the transcriber, for the purpose of explaining the words of the sacred writer, which ought to be expunged, according to a sound canon of criticism laid down by Wetstein,† Griesbach,‡ and others.

3. A third peculiarity of his translation is his habit of rendering the imperfect tense in the participial form in English. Wakefield has perhaps adhered too strictly to this mode of translation, but it frequently expresses the particular time of performing an action with far greater precision than the common form. Thus Luke vii. 11., we read in the received version, "It came to pass the day after, that he *went* into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples *went* with him, and much people." After this completion of the action, we do not expect to hear of any thing that took place previous to his arrival in the city; but in the next verses we are told of his raising the young man to life, "as he *came nigh* to the gate of the city." Wakefield's translation is preferable: "On the next day, Jesus *was going* to a city called Nain, and a good many of his disciples and a great multitude *were going* with him." But it is not to be denied, that this rendering sometimes gives wrong impressions, thus Matt. ix. 24. "Jesus saith to them, (the company at the house of the Ruler of the synagogue,) Withdraw, for the girl is not dead, but asleep. And they were laughing at him." This implies that they were laughing at him before he spoke. He has in this instance adhered too closely to his system.

The imperfect tense is frequently used in Greek to express the continuance of action, which is entirely overlooked in the common translation, but which Wakefield has observed; thus Luke iv. 44. he renders, "he *continued preaching* in the

* See his Memoirs, vol. 1. p. 365. † Nov. Test. vol. 2. p. 862-3. reg. 9.

‡ Proleg. p. 60 recens. secund.

synagogues of Galilee." The grammatical accuracy, also, is worthy of observation, with which he has corrected many words and clauses which were erroneously translated in the common version. The most remarkable of these amendments is, his employing the auxiliary *will*, in the third person of the future tense, when prophecy merely is intended. It is surprising how often an erroneous use is made of the verb *shall* in the old translation. Take for an instance the prophecy in the 24th chap. of Matt. The third person of the future is rendered uniformly by *shall* instead of *will*, and the mistake occurs no less than forty-nine times in a chapter of fifty-one verses; which are all corrected by Wakefield. Of a similar kind is the erroneous use of the pronoun *which* for *who*, as Matt. ii. 20. "For they are dead, *which* sought the child's life." Examples of this occur on almost every page of the old translation, and are generally amended by Wakefield. These grammatical corrections are not absolutely peculiar to him, as many of them are found in Campbell's Gospels, and in the Improved Version. But he has surpassed them both in uniform attention to the proper rendering of these words.

4. A fourth peculiarity of Wakefield's Translation is the care which he has used to give the force of idiomatical expressions, not by translating the words literally, as is so frequently done in the Common Version, but by a more accurate rendering of the word or phrase, in appropriate English expressions. By translating an idiom literally, according to the usual meaning of each individual word, a wrong idea is sometimes given to the mere English reader, and at others, no idea at all. Thus the words *ἀποκριθεὶς αὐτοῖς* are nothing more than an idiomatic pleonasm, and signify "he spake," or "addressed them;" but our translators, by always rendering these words, "answered and said," have sometimes implied, that part of a conversation was lost or omitted. This expression occurs in the account of the transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 3. 4. "Behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him. Then *answered* Peter and *said* unto Jesus," &c. and if we are not led astray by the inaccuracy, it is still an erroneous as well as inelegant translation. This and other similar instances Wakefield has rendered far better by the single word, "spake," or "said."

In Gal. i. 15. 16. we find the words, "when it pleased God ——— to reveal his son *in* me,"—an expression apparently very ill adapted to the communication of any idea. Wakefield, observing the Hebraism,* has expressed it, "was

* Vide Vorstium De Hebraismis N. T. p. 215—219.

pleased to reveal his son *by me*." Matt. xiii. 57. stands in the Common Version, "they were offended *in* him," *ἐν αὐτῷ* being rendered verbally. Wakefield has very properly used the English idiom, "they were offended *at* him." Another Hebraism, which occurs frequently in the Common Version, is the use of a substantive for an adjective; thus Rom. vi. 6. *τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας* is rendered, "the body of sin;" but Wakefield has given the meaning of the original by translating the second substantive adjectively, "The sinful body." In Ep. James i. 18. *λογὸν ἀληθείας* means "true word," or "true doctrine," as Wakefield has it; but in the Common Version it is given verbatim, "the word of truth;" to which expression we are so habituated, that we do not at first perceive that it means nothing. Another idiomatic expression of the sacred writers, which is rendered verbally by the old translators, but more correctly by Wakefield, consists in the use of the verb *δοκῶ*, *to think*, or *to seem*, when there is no intention to express doubt or suspicion. Thus Mark x. 42. "ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles," meaning, as Wakefield has given it, "the rulers of the Gentiles." So, 1 Cor. xi. 16. "If any man seem to be contentious," for "If any one love contention," as Wakefield has accurately rendered it. The same form of expression occurs in several other places, as Matt. iii. 9. Luke xxii. 24. Gal. ii. 9. Heb. iv. 1. in all of which we find Wakefield's Translation the superior.

A fifth peculiarity in the phraseology of the New Testament, almost entirely disregarded by King James's translators, is the occasional use of the conjunction *ἵνα* to denote an effect instead of a cause. I cannot find that the word was used in this manner by any of the Classical writers; the best lexicographers do not mention it; and Hoozeveen* who speaks of this use of it, draws his examples from the New Testament, except one from Archimedes.† That it is so used by the sacred writers, I think cannot be doubted by any one who turns to John v. 20. where we read in the Received Version, "For the father loveth the son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth; and he will shew him greater works than these, *that ye may marvel*;" *ἵνα ὑμεῖς θαυμάζητε*. It is certain that the astonishment of the Jews could not have been the *final cause*, or the *motive* to the performance of greater miracles, though it it would probably have been the *effect*; and Wakefield has, without doubt, given the true meaning by the words, "so as to make you wonder." In Gal. v. 17. occurs one of the few instances in which the old translators have deviated from their

* Doctrina Particularum.

† And this not exactly in point.

usual practice in order to comply with the exigence of the passage, or the rules of grammar, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, ————— so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." All agree that *ina* in this instance indicates the effect. In Luke xi. 50. we find the following remarkable passage; "that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation." Wakefield has given a very different meaning to this verse, rendering it thus, "*So that* the blood of all the prophets, that has been shed from the foundation of the world, *will be* required of this very race." Without stopping to inquire, whether this translation of *γιναι* be correct, is it not obvious that he has greatly improved upon the Common Version, by rendering *ina* in such a manner as not to imply, that the punishment of the Jews was the *motive* or *object* of the Divine Being in sending to them prophets and apostles? Instances of a similar use of *ina* may be found in Luke ix. 45. Rom. iii. 19. 11. 31. and if these examples be sufficient to establish the principle, it may be applied to the explanation of the phrase *ina πληρωθη*.

5. A fifth peculiarity of this translation is the happy ingenuity which is often discovered in arranging and connecting clauses. Wakefield has, by a judicious use of this expedient, frequently elucidated what was obscure, and shewn the connexion of what was before apparently loose and disjointed. Thus in 1 Cor. xi. 16, 17. we read in the Common Version, "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. [Now in this that I declare unto you,] I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse." The clause inclosed in brackets, in the 17th verse, appears altogether redundant and useless; and the word *παράγγελω* is rendered in a manner entirely unprecedented in the New Testament. It occurs in twenty-nine other places, and in all of them requires to be rendered by *command*, or *charge*, and is accordingly so translated uniformly. But it is impossible to render it in that manner as it stands; and Wakefield has judiciously separated it from the verse with which it is now joined. He has also, on very respectable authority,* changed the form of the verb from the present participle, to the present tense indicative, and gives the verses thus. "If any one, however, love contention, neither we nor the church of God allow this custom. And such is my charge to you." i. e. respecting the wearing of veils, of which St.

* See Griesbach.

Paul had just been speaking : This converts an awkwardly redundant clause into a suitable expression of apostolical authority, is a more correct translation of the words, and forms a very proper conclusion to the subject on which the apostle had just been writing.

In Acts v. 12—15. and Rom. ii. 12—16. he has avoided long parentheses, and made what was obscure, perspicuous, by a very proper transposition of a clause in the one case, and a verse in the other. In 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4. occurs an instance, in which he has happily connected two verses, and judiciously altered the arrangement of clauses. Examples of this sort are very frequent throughout the work, but particularly numerous in the Epistles ; and they are important, because they give distinctness and exactness to writings, which as they are read in the Common Version, are productive of many mistakes and much confusion.

Under this head, may be remarked the judgment with which he has divided the various books into paragraphs, according to the custom generally adopted by the later editors and translators of the New Testament. It is a custom which cannot be too much commended, and Wakefield has been peculiarly judicious in his divisions.

6. A sixth peculiarity of Wakefield's Translation, and an excellence of far greater importance than any that I have mentioned, is its freedom from a class of words, which have acquired a technical meaning, to which there is nothing corresponding in the language of the sacred writers. From seeing these words frequently employed in controversial theology, we have learned to associate with them the signification in which they are used by the sectarian, not that in which they were employed by the Apostles and Evangelists ; and in order to arrive at a knowledge of the latter, it is obvious that we must throw off all these foreign associations, and carry ourselves back to the time when systems of divinity were calamities yet unknown. But how is he to throw off these shackles, and learn the apostolical sense of this class of words, whose whole idea of them is drawn from the "doubtful disputations," which have been so multiplied in the theological world ? To the mere English reader, it is nearly impossible to disentangle them from that mass of associations, which has been accumulating for centuries ; and the only means left to represent to him the simple meaning of Scripture, is to erase these words from his Bible, and supply their places with those which have not yet been made to convey unintelligible mysteries, or to stand as the expression of incommunicable ideas. This it is cer-

tainly not too much to say Wakefield has accomplished far better than most other English translators.

The most striking illustration of what I have remarked, is the word *grace*, which is almost uniformly used by our translators as corresponding to the Greek word *χρης*. It is possible that it meant little or nothing different from that word at the period when our Common Version was made, but it has since acquired a peculiar theological and technical sense, to which *χρης* certainly does not correspond. There is nothing in the Greek word which can imply that secret and mysterious divine influence, which is so generally conveyed by the word *grace* to the English reader. It is acknowledged by most scholars, that the word *favour* represents more accurately than any other the language affords, the exact meaning of *χρης*, yet this is complained of* as not "an adequate substitute" for *grace*.—It is said to be "extremely languid; acting as a sedative to the fervour of a devout mind." Undoubtedly it is not an adequate substitute for the word *grace*; if it were, it should be rejected; but the true question is, whether it is "an adequate substitute" for *χρης*, and if it be, no disgust at its languid character or sedative effect will deter the conscientious man from adopting it. Wakefield, whose scholarship and integrity are alike above detraction, has usually substituted it for *grace*, sometimes however rendering *χρης* by *kindness*, or *gift*, but uniformly banishing a word which makes the Bible speak the language of a sect. In like manner he has preferred *deliverance* to *redemption*, *choice* to *election*, *chosen* to *elect*, and *reconciliation* to *atonement*.

With equal propriety he has adopted *master*, instead of *Lord*, as the translation of *κυρις*, when it is used as a term of address. The title, *Lord*, is so often applied to the Supreme Being, both in the Old and New Testament, that the union of something sacred and divine with our idea of the word is almost unavoidable; and it has undoubtedly had a great effect, as much perhaps as any single word in the Bible, in strengthening and confirming that opinion of the supreme divinity of our Saviour which is so common among Christians. We find his disciples using an appellation, which we ourselves should employ as a sign of the highest possible respect and reverence; and without the knowledge, or without the reflection, that the same word was then used as the common mode of address between equals, that it was nothing more than a term

* By Dr. Cogan in his Theological Disquisitions, Vol. 2, Note B. p. 502.

of decent civility, we easily fall into the persuasion that all who saw and listened to him, must have been impressed with the same reverential awe, with which we should address our Lord and master, were he again to appear upon earth. A moment's reflection will convince any one, that a most erroneous idea is thus deeply and firmly fixed in the mind of the unlettered man, by the perpetual recurrence of this single word. Campbell, for the most part, and the editors of the Improved Version uniformly, I believe, agree with Wakefield in this essential improvement.

7. The last superiority of Wakefield's Translation, which I shall mention, is one which pervades every page, and the proofs of which are innumerable, viz.: the accuracy and fidelity with which he has commonly given the true meaning of the original. It is this which gives it its peculiar value, and its superiority in this respect is undisputed and indisputable. Under a previous head, I have given some examples of the skill with which he has transfused the force of Greek or Hebrew idioms into vernacular expressions. There are many cases also in which our translators have failed to give any meaning, or have given a wrong one through apparent ignorance. Thus they have translated Gal. i. 10. in this remarkable manner; "Do I now *persuade* men or God?" servilely rendering *πειθω* by its common, as if it were its only signification, without thinking it necessary to find any rational meaning in the language of an apostle. Wakefield translates the verse, "Am I now seeking the approbation of men, or of God?" Rom. viii. 26. stands in the common version, "the spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that *cannot be uttered*," with a similar disregard to all sense or meaning. The Improved Version has not much amended it by saying, "with groanings that cannot be *expressed*." Both have erred by rendering *αλαλητοις* too literally. Wakefield has avoided so gross an absurdity by rendering it "secret groans."

Striking instances of erroneous translation in the Common Version are, the habitual rendering of *προσκυνω* by *worship*, of *σκανδαλιζω* by *offend*, of *αιων* by *world*, of *προφητειω* by *prophecy*, which Wakefield's better knowledge has corrected. Instances of this sort might be multiplied indefinitely, were it necessary; but I should shrink from the task of pointing out all the cases, in which he has improved upon all who have gone before him.

It may be observed of the faults of Wakefield, that they are obvious to every one. Erudition is not necessary to discover or to correct them, but they are as striking to the mere-

ly English reader, as to the acute critical scholar. Thus, no one can read of the impotent man, John v. 9. that "he took up his bed, and *was walking*," without perceiving the impropriety as well as awkwardness of the translation; and every one will observe that the expression, "of *a* living God," 1 Tim. iii. 15. is not more remarkable for its singularity than its incorrectness. One can scarcely fail to perceive also, upon looking over his notes, that he gives undue importance to the Eastern Versions, as few are so ignorant, as not to know, that there are other and superior means of settling the text of the New Testament. The case is unfortunately otherwise with his improvements; and while the attentive reader will be struck with his defects, and will observe his obvious faults, it is not equally probable that he will perceive, how often his Translation gives more accurately the meaning of the original, how often the force of Greek or Hebrew idioms is shown in English expressions, or how often a new connexion of a clause, or a new pointing of a verse, suggests a preferable meaning. The candid man, however, will not suffer himself to be prejudiced against a work, the faults of which, though more obvious, are not more decided, than its excellencies; while the former will be generally allowed to be of far less real importance than the latter, by those who can appreciate both.

It may be observed also, that his faults do not arise from theological prejudice. They have in fact no connexion with particular religious opinions. If it should be said, that his views of the character of our Saviour suggested to him that mode which he has adopted, of translating words without the article in Greek, with the indefinite English article, it may be replied, that it is of little consequence by what it was suggested, as it is certain that theological opinion was not his guide in translating even here; for while he renders *ὁ υἱος Θεου* in one place, *a* son of God, he uses the *definite* article for the same phrase, in another. Theological prejudice is more consistent.

Should any one, however, while he acquits him of this charge, think him liable to that of having introduced unnecessary and capricious alterations from the received Version, it is to be constantly recollected, that our respect for the Bible, as the word of God, has extended itself to much in the Common Version, which is decidedly and confessedly wrong. Many an expression, which has become obscure from its antiquity, or which in the course of ages has lost its original signification, is regarded with an almost religious veneration; and any change is deprecated, as breaking up associations

which have been long established and habitually cherished. It is frequently the case, that we are at first disgusted by an alteration, even of words which we do not understand, or to which we can affix no definite meaning, and it requires reflection and examination to reconcile us to the necessary variation. With a knowledge of this feeling, which is so common, if it be not universal, among the readers of the Common Version, it will certainly be no more than just to avoid precipitancy in charging a man of learning and integrity with introducing changes unnecessarily and capriciously. Wakefield's fine scholarship will not be denied by any one; his remarkable freedom from theological prejudice must be acknowledged by those who can appreciate his high spirit of independence; while his exalted, firm, incorruptible integrity must be proved to all the world, by his noble sacrifices of interest to principle. These were some of the qualifications which he brought to the work of translation. To these are to be added, his strong and ardent ambition for literary eminence, his conscientious devotion of his labours and attainments to the sacred cause of theology, and his deep sense of the infinite importance of Christianity, and we shall find it difficult to select any one, in whom so many requisites and so many motives were combined, to produce a fair and accurate Translation of the New Testament.

If the result has corresponded with what might, on these grounds, be anticipated, as it has been my endeavour to shew, if the improvements in his Translation are numerous and important, and its defects comparatively trifling, and not the result of peculiar theological tenets; nothing can surely be wanting to prove that its more extended circulation would not only be useful to the theological student, but would essentially promote the cause of true Christianity, by disseminating a more correct knowledge of the meaning of the sacred writers.

EJACULATORY PRAYER.

"If prayer were not enjoined for the perfection, it would be permitted to the weakness, of our nature. We should be betrayed into it, even if we thought it sin; and pious ejaculations would escape from our lips, though we were obliged to preface them with the petition, 'God forgive me for praying!'"

Mrs. Barbauld's answer to Wakefield's pamphlet against public worship, p. 14.

THE precept of Paul to the Thessalonians, *pray without ceasing*, is peculiar; and unless we have right sentiments of the nature of prayer, may appear to be impracticable. For

who can always be repeating his prayers? Or how can we be always praying, without neglecting other duties to God,—and still more, our various and important obligations to those about us? But what is Prayer? Have you thought that the use of certain forms is essential to it? Have you deemed it necessary, in order to pray, that you should either join with others; or retire to some secret place, that you might open your heart to God? Have you supposed that prayer could be performed only at stated seasons, or when your heart was in a peculiar state of excitement? All these circumstances may be, and often are, highly favourable to devotion. But if we think them to be *necessary*, our views of the duty are too narrow. Prayer is far less the use of certain language, than the exercise of certain dispositions and affections; and the great design of the *expression* of prayer is, to strengthen the dispositions and affections in which it peculiarly consists. The design of *forms of prayer* is, to secure us against inconsistency and impropriety, either in the sentiments or the expressions of devotion. The purpose of *social worship* is, peculiarly, to unite our social with our pious affections, and by the same act to bind us at once more closely to each other, and to God. The object of *secret prayer* is, the free expression to God of what we could not freely express with, or before, one another. And *seasons of prayer* are prescribed, because the duty for which we have no allotted time, is easily deferred from hour to hour, and from day to day, till it is utterly forgotten. But if the dispositions and affections, in which prayer peculiarly consists, are felt to any considerable degree, it cannot be shut up within the limits of stated hours, and of particular and favourite places of devotion; it cannot always wait till others are ready to join in it; nor be restrained by the forms, from which, perhaps, it has derived the most important benefits. These dispositions and affections, where they have obtained ascendancy, will often burst asunder the bonds, by which our labours, or cares, or pleasures would confine them. They will rise to God under the pressure of circumstances and of events, which would bear them down to the earth; and in proportion as they are exercised and cherished, will produce the most important effects on our characters, our habits, and our happiness. These momentary, but sincere references and expressions to God, are an accomplishment of the precept, *pray without ceasing*. And not only may we thus pray without neglecting any other duty, but in this habitual devotion is the most uniform and powerful excitement to fidelity in every obligation.

Let me but refer to some of the circumstances, which exercise the dispositions and affections of a mind, in which devotion has thus become habitual; and to the mode of its operation.

But where shall I begin? In addressing those only who are christians, I should ask, what is the circumstance, the object, or the event, which has not raised your thoughts and your desires to God? How few are your waking hours, in which you do not, though only in a single expression, admire the wisdom, acknowledge the justice, rejoice in the bounty, implore the guidance, or ask the forgiveness of God? How easily do your thoughts, when not necessarily demanded by other objects, flow in a current of pious meditation, of holy desires and resolutions, of benevolent purposes, or of plans of personal improvement? How often do you ask, either for yourself or for others, the succours, the supports, or the encouragements of the gospel? And in your busiest hours of ordinary labour, and your highest enjoyment of the pleasures of the world, how often do you secretly say, *thou, God, seest me!—God preserve me!* or, *God, I thank thee!* But how many are there, who have never yet felt this heavenward tendency of a mind refined, and strengthened, and exalted by a faithful application of the principles of our religion! How many, who have not even a stated season for daily prayer! Open your eyes, I beseech you, and your hearts, to see and to feel, what God is doing, to elevate your thoughts and affections to himself; and let prayer become, not only your occasional refuge, when you cannot elsewhere find even a momentary security,—not only a formal offering, which is without incense,—but a perpetual sacrifice; an offering of the whole heart; a devotion of the understanding, the affections, the will, and the whole life to his service. This is the oblation on which the sacred fire will descend; and its sweet perfume will smell to the throne of heaven.

A mind and heart inclined to habitual devotion, like a mind and heart inclined to business or to pleasure, from the very influence of habit would feel the most painful state of want, if long detained from its favourite employment and gratification. A man devoted to business or to pleasure is quick to discern, and eager to seize, every circumstance, that may minister to his success. And a man, who loves communion with God, need not seek far nor long for objects, upon which to exercise his devout affections; nor will he fail of making the various circumstances which are adapted to his purpose, conducive to the great end of his life,—the closer union of his soul with God. Consider but for a moment, that God is the object of his supreme

affection; the service and favour of God his chosen pursuit; and the final enjoyment of God in heaven, at once the spring and end of his desires; and then look upon the world, and upon the circumstances of human life, and say, what is there, within or about him, which he may not make, and which will not be, subservient to his high and great design? Say if, in the daily exercises of his affections and dispositions, he does not fulfil the command, to pray without ceasing?

1. With the eye, and with the affections of such a man, look upon the world. What do you see? What, that is not the work of God? Indulge and cherish the sentiment, that he is in all, and over all; and what is the language of your heart? Does winter hold his triumphant reign, freezing the air, binding in its chains the springs and rivers, spreading wide its snows, staying the current of vegetable life, and compelling all that breathe to seek for shelter from its influence? 'Summer and winter, fire and hail, snow and vapours, and stormy winds, fulfil Thy word!' Or, do you see the animals at the stream quenching their thirst, or enjoying the abundant provision which is made for their support? 'They are thy care, O God, and their sustenance is from thy liberal hand.' Does the sun rise to enlighten, and to warm the earth,—to give a season for labour,—to gladden all that live by his cheerful influences, and to give a new spring to the vegetable creation? Do the clouds refresh the ground with their shade, and enrich it with their showers? Do the moon and stars give a glory to the night, even greater than we see in the bright light of day? Does the return of darkness bring with it a time of rest, not less necessary than food for ourselves, and for all the creatures about us? 'Thine, Father, are the darkness and the light, the sun and the stars, the clouds and the rain.' Yes, every drop in the vast ocean, every particle of this globe on which we live, every creature and every thing we behold, is God's; for he made them, and by him they are every moment preserved.—Do you see evidences of *wisdom* in the laws and courses of nature? 'Thine is the work, O infinitely wise and eternal mind!' Are you astonished at the displays of *power* which you behold? 'Thy power, O God, like thy wisdom, is infinite.' Do you every where behold a *parental providence*? 'It is thy goodness, O my Father; and I will bless thee for thy bounty to them that cannot thank thee!'—Thus does every thing around us, the great and the minute, the wild and the cultivated, the delightful and the terrific, preach to us of God, and touch a string in the pious heart, which vibrates devotion. God is so associated with all these objects in the mind of a pious man, that where-

ever he may be, and whatever his employment, the sight of them recalls the thought of God; and with the thought, a correspondent emotion and affection. This emotion and this affection is a prayer; and to him who sees the heart, far more acceptable, than the most pompous and costly offering, in which any desire or feeling is withholden from the authority of his law.

And, 2dly, with a heart disposed to love, to fear, to trust, and to serve God, observe the objects in which he is more immediately blessing yourself, and those with whom he has connected you, and consider the ordinary circumstances of every day; and say if they are not suited, in such a heart, to excite those frequent, secret ejaculations, which at once illustrate the nature of prayer, and shew the practicability of making it habitual.

What are these objects and circumstances? You are looking upon a field. Whose is it? Your neighbour's? Thank God that he has it. Or is it your own? Thank God who has given it to you. Do you see the growing corn, or are you gathering the ripened harvest, which is to give you bread, or to support the families of others? Thank him who produced, and who alone could mature it. Have you a comfortable habitation? When you enter it, and when you think of it, acknowledge him from whose goodness you received it. Do you reflect with pleasure on your abundance? Raise your heart to the bounteous giver. Have you and your family health? Rejoice in it as the gift of God. Do you retain the soundness of your faculties? What gratitude do you owe for their preservation! Are you indulged with the intercourse of friendship and love? Thank him who gave you friends, and enables you to enjoy them. Do you look with mingled delight and solicitude upon your children? Acknowledge the goodness of God; and look up for his guidance and blessing, that you may be enabled to rear them to his glory. Can you pursue your daily labours? Thank the God of your strength. Are you feeble, or suffering under any disease? Be strong in faith, and endure as seeing him who is invisible. Have you escaped any danger? Bless your Preserver. Has any one whom you love been rescued from peril? Acknowledge the hand that saved him. Are you able to minister to the necessities of another? Praise him who has given you the means, and the disposition. Do you see the deaf, the blind, the lame, the diseased, and think with joy that you are in health, and can see, and hear, and move where you will, without pain? Let your joy be that of gratitude; and with your sympathies for those who suffer, let your

thanksgivings for yourself ascend to heaven. Do you enjoy rest after fatigue? Consider who refreshes you, and renews your strength. Have your hours passed in tranquil pleasure? Think how they might have passed, and thank God for this season of serenity and peace. Are you angry with another? Say to God, 'Forgive me my trespasses, as I forgive others.' Are you oppressed with the cares of your family, or of your business? Remember that you are to give account to God, and ask if they are ordered according to his will. Are you tempted to indulge any bad passion, or vicious appetite? Feel that the eye of God is upon you, and seek for his succour and deliverance. Are you doubting concerning any dispositions or conduct? Seek of God for grace to judge yourself, as you will be judged. Have you done to another as you would not that he should have done to you? Look up to God while you are considering how you may make amends for the injury. Are you sensible of having wasted your time, or abused any talent; of having spoken rashly, or acted unkindly? Ask God to guard you in future temptations. Are you suffering any affliction? Look up for consolation. Would you read the scriptures? Reflect that they are from God, and contain the words of eternal life. Do you remember what you have read? Ask for grace to practice it. Do you feel a good disposition? Request of God to strengthen it. Have you overcome a temptation? Thank him who made you victorious. Do you desire to subdue any evil propensity, or to feel more strongly the influence of any principle of piety or virtue? Seek the assistance promised to those who ask for it. Have you been overcome by any appetite or passion? with your resolution of amendment, say, 'May God prosper me!'—What, in fine, is the object, and what the circumstance, which may not, and will not exercise the devotion of a heart, sincerely and strongly inclined to piety? In moments of fear and of security, of anticipation and of the accomplishment of desire, of joy and of sorrow, of adversity and prosperity, of sickness and of health, of solitude and of social pleasure, of business and of relaxation, the thoughts and affections may in a moment ascend to God, and in a moment may offer a prayer. By thus habitually looking to God,—acknowledging him in all circumstances and events,—committing ourselves to him, and seeking his approbation in all our dispositions, and indulgencies, and pursuits, we are, as far as possible, to make every action an act of devotion.

This *habit* of ejaculatory prayer is not obtained, till great progress is made in the christian life; for it cannot be maintained in sincerity, till God has become the first object in our

affections, and it is the first desire of our hearts to live in obedience to his commands. But let the disposition to it be indulged, and circumstances not to be enumerated will occur every day, and perhaps every hour, to exercise and to confirm it; to bear on the soul towards perfection, and to advance its preparation for the nearer vision, and eternal enjoyment of God.

Every good man has stated seasons for prayer. But the stated prayers of a good man are neither feeble, nor momentary in their influence. He retires from them, remembering the sentiments he has expressed to God; the acknowledgments he has made to him; the petitions he has offered, and the engagements into which he has entered. And can he carry this remembrance into his thoughts and plans, his social intercourse, his business and pleasures, without frequently indulging ejaculatory sentiments, acknowledgments, and petitions? Will they not be the natural,—I may say, the irresistible—language of his heart? As well may the man love his friend, and not think of him; or be with him, and not speak to him; as the good man may love God, and feel his presence, and not address his thoughts to him. As well may a man of the world forget his possessions, and his favourite gratifications, as a pious man that treasure and happiness, which he hopes for, and believes he shall obtain, in heaven. And can he think of this treasure, and cherish these hopes, and feel no aspirations of his heart towards God, their infinitely bounteous author and giver? No; we do not pray sincerely, if we feel the spirit of prayer only while we are using its language. The prayers of a truly good man exalt his heart to the closest union with the holy Being whom he worships; and it is one great object of his prayers, that in all the circumstances and conduct of life, he may glorify God, by a temper, affections, will and conduct, conformed to his commands. Will he then go from this service to forget God; to admire his works, without remembering their Author; to enjoy without gratitude; to be tempted, without remembering him from whom he has sought for succour; to be tried, without thinking of him whom he has acknowledged as his support; to sin, and feel no shame or sorrow; and even seek his happiness in indulgencies, which a moment's reflection must convince him, would incur the displeasure of God? No. *Prayer is but a means for the advancement of religion and virtue in our dispositions, conversations, and lives; and if this be not its effect, it avails us nothing.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

SIR,—It has been advised—I believe by Doddridge—that every one should select for himself, every morning, a verse, or short sentence from the Bible, which he may carry in his thoughts through the day ; and apply for his self-government and religious improvement, in the various circumstances in which it may be employed, either for excitement, or restraint. To those who are accustomed to begin every day with reading a portion of the scriptures, it will be obvious, how very easy it must be to make this selection ; and it will demand but the thought of a moment to feel, if the text is judiciously chosen, actually retained in the memory, and applied with any fidelity, that this practice must greatly conduce to the formation and establishment of a christian temper, affections and habits. By faithfully persevering in this practice through a year, three hundred and sixty-five texts will have obtained, not only our distinct attention to their import, but our personal application. And as perpetual dropping wears away stones, it would seem that this must be a sure means of wearing away, at least in part, any prevailing evil dispositions and propensities within us. As the amount of piety and virtue in our lives is formed of the distinct acts of duty to God and to our fellow creatures, to which we are every day and every hour called by the circumstances in which the providence of God places us, this daily and direct application to our own hearts and conduct, of some distinct principle or duty of his word, must daily enrich us more with the treasures of true glory and virtue ; daily bring us to an increased preparation for the eternal service and enjoyment of God. It will indeed require vigilance and resolution, as well as prayer, to secure our fidelity, in this application to ourselves of the principles and duties of religion. But how imperious are our obligations to this watchfulness, and care, and perseverance, and prayer, when we consider that, by this word which God has given us, we shall each be judged in the last day !

I would call the attention of the readers of the Christian Disciple to this subject. It will require but a very short time, in the morning to select a text of scripture for the day. And I would propose, in making this selection,

1. That it should be *the first work of every morning.*
2. That the text be directly of a *practical kind.*
3. That it should be selected with a view to the establishment in the heart of some sentiment or principle, which we may think or know to be particularly important to *the exigencies of our own character.*

4. That in the secret prayer of the morning, before entering upon the business of the day, it should always be made an object of distinct petition to God, that the doctrine or duty so selected may be impressed on the memory, and faithfully applied for the regulation of thought and disposition, conversation and conduct. And

5. That every night, before going to rest, a few minutes at least be given to self-examination; and particularly to the inquiry, *what influence has been excited, and what effect produced, by the principle or rule selected for the day.*

From a book in which rules of life thus chosen were recorded every morning, I will extract the texts for every day of one month. These will serve for a specimen, and an example.

1. Matthew vi. 14, 15. If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

2. Matt. vii. 1. Judge not, that ye be not judged.

3. Matt. vii. 2. With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

4. Matt. vii. 3. Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

5. Matt. vii. 5. First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6. Matt. xxiii. 23. Hypocrites! ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin; and have omitted *the weightier matters of the law*, judgment, mercy and fidelity.

7. Luke xviii. 17. Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.

8. 1 Peter i. 13. Gird up the loins of your mind; be sober, and hope to the end.

9. 1 Peter iii. 10. He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips, that they speak no guile.

10. Galatians v. 22, 23. *The fruit of the spirit* is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance. *Against such there is no law.*

11. Philippians ii. 3. Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory.

12. 1 Cor. xiii. 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and *have not charity*, I am as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

13. John xii. 26. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

14. Luke xix. 13. Occupy till I come.

15. Mark x. 44. Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all.

16. Luke vi. 45. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good.

17. Prov. xxiv. 19. Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked.

18. Mark xiii. 33—37. Take ye heed, watch and pray; lest suddenly coming, he find you sleeping.

19. John xvii. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. So shall ye be my disciples.

20. Romans viii. 14. As many as be led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

21. Romans viii. 2. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

22. Luke xii. 21. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

23. Prov. xvii. 22. A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.

24. Mark vii. 15. The things that come out of him, those are they that defile a man.

25. 1 John ii. 4. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar.

26. John v. 41. I receive not honour from men.

27. 2 Cor. iv. 8. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair.

28. Matt. xii. 50. Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

29. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price.

30. John xvii. 16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

31. Matt. xix. 17. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

DESIGN OF THE SABBATH.

THE institution of the Sabbath is the immediate appointment of God, and one of the most simple and efficacious me-

thods, that can be devised for the advancement of religious knowledge and virtue. We will take it for granted, that there is none among us, who would be willing to deny its utility or obligation ; for regarding it merely as a civil institution, it is of inestimable importance in maintaining the peace and good order of society ; and undoubtedly there are benefits, indirectly resulting from its observance, which could be ascertained and appreciated only by the sad contrast, that would be exhibited, were it but for a short time suspended.

In the first institution of the Sabbath, there seem to have been two great objects contemplated ; a day of rest from labour, and a day of public acknowledgment of God. Under the first of these the Sabbath is uniformly represented in the scriptures ; and it seems to enter essentially into its design. It is in commemoration of the Rest, which, in accommodation to our views, God is said to have taken after the work of creation, and in the command, which enjoins it, we are continually reminded of that grand truth of natural religion, that Jehovah is the creator of all. It holds up a lasting monument to the confusion of infidelity ; it exposes the falsehood of the notion which speculative atheism would maintain, that all things are the product of necessity or chance ; for through faith in the declarations of this divine command we understand, that the worlds were framed by the word of God ; so that things, which are seen, were not made of things, which do appear.

As a day of rest the Sabbath should be welcomed, not only for the relief and tranquillity it bestows, but for the evidence, which such an institution gives us, of the tender care and benevolence of God. He foresaw, that as the consequence of transgression man would be condemned to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow ; he foresaw how incessantly ambition would toil for the distinctions of life, how avarice would extort the painful service, and the master oppress the weary slave and his dependant cattle. In merciful regard to the humblest of his creation, as well as to ourselves, was this rest appointed. And there is something sublime as well as cheering to the benevolent heart, in the repose, which the Sabbath implies. It is the repose of nature when the bustle of the world should cease ; when man is called to suspend for a little time his eager pursuit of pleasure, of ambition, or gain ; and the animal creation, who cannot share with him in its moral benefits, may partake at least of its tranquillity and comfort.

The idea of simple rest, however, is the very lowest, in which we can regard the Sabbath ; and in this view we speak of it chiefly in reference to the animal creation. To man the

Sabbath is given for the worship of his God. He is called to rest from daily labour, that he may have leisure more immediately to acknowledge and adore his creator; to present his thanksgiving for mercies; to implore forgiveness for his sins; to examine his life and character; to reflect on his destiny and the grounds of his immortal hopes. It seems peculiarly designed for social and public devotion, when members of the same family, and of the same community, may unite in the mutual benefits of instruction and prayer. Without some established institution, like this, it would be impossible for the public forms of religion to be maintained. And the christian rejoices in this day, and venerates it as holy, when he regards it as consecrated to the public honour of his God; when he may unite with his fellow-immortals in the noblest services of devotion, and contemplate with them those truths, on which he reposes for his improvement and hope on earth, and for his joy in heaven.

Our purpose does not require, that we enter into the arguments, on which, as christians, we maintain the observance of the First instead of the Seventh day. The ground of the institution to the Jews was peculiarly their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt; and this is assigned in the same command which refers to the *rest* from the work of creation. But the christian, in his Sabbath commemorates a far more glorious event. He follows the first instead of the seventh day, because on this day his Saviour rose from the dead, and appeared as the Son of God with power, and by that resurrection has begotten him to an hope, full of immortality.

Still further, in addition to the strictly religious purposes of the Sabbath, the christian will delight in this day for the order and harmony, which it diffuses through families and communities, for the habits of decency and sobriety, so essential to religion, which it cherishes, especially for the kindly affections, and the friendly interest, which unite the worshippers of one God and Father, in prayers for the same mercies, and in participation of the same privileges. He blesses the Sabbath too as the opportunity of public instruction to the poor and ignorant, whose daily toil may deprive them of other means; and thence in the fellowship it produces as softening the distinctions of wealth and station, which are indeed indispensable to the civil community, but which christianity enjoins us to regard as important opportunities for the exercise of mutual sympathies and reciprocal virtues.

Nor can it be forgotten, that in this day of rest, the christian rejoices at the anticipation of his rest in Heaven. In its

quiet repose, in the exemption it brings from the cares and passions of the world, and especially in its sacred services, he traces the image, though faint, of that celestial state, to which his heart aspires; and he strives so to fulfil its duties, that they shall ripen his spirit for its pure and immortal joy.

From the nature and design of the Sabbath obviously result its obligation and duties. If it be enjoined as a day of rest, it follows of course, that we are to cease from daily labours; and though, from the nature of christianity, and the example and instructions of its author, the restraints imposed are not so rigid, as were those of the Jewish law, yet undoubtedly we are guilty of profaning this day, when we allow ourselves in any business or amusement, inconsistent with its sacred purposes. No prospects of unusual gain, no favourite projects, however important, no pursuits of mere relaxation or pleasure, no gratifications of curiosity, can be admitted as an apology for the violation of so express a command.

And if the day be consecrated to the public worship of God, then it follows that we are bound seriously and constantly to unite with our fellow christians in this most pleasing and important duty. We are not, in the language of the Apostle, to forget the assembling of ourselves together. We must not be deterred from the house of God by a threatening sky; or by such an excessively tender regard to our health, as we should never allow to interrupt our weekly employments; or by any fancied demands of hospitality or politeness. If there be any, who are disposed to dispense with this duty, under the pretence, that they have already attained, and can learn better for themselves than they can be taught at church, they will do well to remember, that their self-complacency is at least not the fairest evidence of their superior attainments; that the worship of God, the adoration of his glorious majesty, supplication for his mercies, thanksgiving for his benefits, are the great objects of our public assemblies; that in these the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant are alike interested to unite; that with regard to the public instructions of the temple, the most enlightened and improved christian needs frequently to be reminded of the duties he knows, and the necessity of fidelity to his own convictions and hopes; and though, as has been admirably observed by a fine writer, "such is the solemnity and dignity of the subjects of the gospel, that the preacher must perpetually lament, that he so far sinks beneath them, yet such also is their practical importance, that he can hardly speak of them seriously without offering something, that may be blest to the benefit of every well-disposed hearer.

It is not the profoundness of thought, the ingenuity of argument, or the fairest flowers of rhetoric, that best accomplish the ends of instruction; and they, who have made the noblest progress in christian knowledge and holiness, best appreciate those simple truths, in which the great and the humble, the learned and the ignorant are alike concerned, and which are able to make us wise to salvation, through faith that is in Christ.

With respect to the portion of the day, not occupied in the public service, it will be acknowledged, that the New Testament prescribes no particular directions. The circumstances of the christian church at its first establishment and the practice, which either from principle or expediency long continued among the primitive disciples, of honouring the seventh day, may sufficiently account for the want of more explicit commands. If, however, as some have supposed, we are to regard the Christian Sabbath as the substitute or successor of the Jewish, it would follow, that we are bound to rest from our worldly labours; or if, as seems to us a much less disputable ground, it is our duty to attend public worship, then it is equally our duty, and consistency requires it, to abstain from any pursuits during the leisure of the day, that may prevent or impair the benefit we might derive; efface the good impressions of our devotions; weaken the resolutions we may form, or chill the ardour of our holy affections. All our employments should correspond, at least they should not be incompatible, with the sacred duties and the right improvement of the day. "We are not to find our own pleasure, nor do our own works."

It will not be supposed, that we are contending for the rigid and austere observance of the Lord's Day, that was practised and enjoined by our Fathers. We regard the Sabbath as a day, not only of instruction and worship, but of sacred pleasure and most reviving hope. We regard it as favourable in the highest degree to our social and benevolent as well as to our devout affections; and that we are rendering an acceptable service to the God of Sabbaths, in exercising and cherishing a kindly intercourse with each other. But if there be an error in exclusive appropriation of the whole period to acts of worship and religious seclusion, it surely is not the error of the present time. The danger, we apprehend, is from the opposite extreme; and in our impatience of the severity of our fathers, we are perhaps yielding to indulgences, no less unfriendly to the true spirit and just demands of piety. Possibly, too, in the confidence we feel in the general order and sobriety of this portion of our country, in the general respect, which is undoubtedly

felt for the institutions of religion, we are not aware of the abuses, which may insensibly creep in ; and as there is no state more dangerous to the individual, than that of self-complacency and imagined security ; so among the members of a community, where much is fondly boasted of their good principles and steady habits, there may be found indulgences and disorders, which would not obtain a tolerance in older countries, and in cities more populous, and on the whole more corrupt.

We are well aware, that it is but an invidious task to point out prevailing abuses, more especially when they can plead in their support either the opinion or example of those, whom we justly regard with deference and esteem. Yet we hesitate not to say, that the too common interchange of visits of friendship or courtesy, during the intervals of worship, however sanctioned and with whatever kind intentions paid, is a violation of the sacredness of this day. We are not of course referring to such as are prompted by christian sympathy or benevolence ; but to those of convenience, politeness, pleasure, or fashion. We object, that such visits are, or ought to be, an interruption to every well ordered family ; that they lead to thoughts and conversation unfavourable to the improvement of the public service ; that they are not in their nature, or as they are usually conducted, to be distinguished from some of our most worldly occupations ; that if propriety or friendship demand them, they may be made with equal ease at other times ; or in the choice of alternatives, who will deny, that these lesser duties—to give them their highest name—should be totally omitted, rather than interfere with the spirit of the ordinances of God ?

We may be found as those, who beat the air and reason with the whirl-wind, for who has ever yet obtained a successful hearing against the solicitations of worldly ambition or gain ? Still we must regard as totally incompatible with the order and improvement of the Sabbath, some of the habits to which time and example have given their currency in our cities. Can it require proof to any reflecting mind, that the resort to the public Exchange, the employments and conversation of the News-Room, the bustle around the Post-Office, and all the mingled feelings of curiosity, anxiety, pleasure or pain, attending the expectation or reception of news, must be injurious at least, if not fatal, to the religious improvement of the day. Is it urged, that nothing of all this can be dispensed with in the commercial world ? We answer, that in the first and noblest commercial city of the world, much of all this is dispensed with : that

in London the Post-Office, as well as the Exchange, is closed ; that no mail is opened, and none departs from the city on the Sunday ; and we believe, that with all her vast population, the stranger would witness no such resort for news, &c. as is to be found in our comparatively little cities. Is it urged, that the affairs of life cannot proceed with the interruptions which a stricter observance of the day would demand ? We answer, that he, who ordained the Sabbath, knew, better than we, all that is necessary for man ; that he has enjoined nothing incompatible with the best promotion of human interests ; that the order and improvement of society, still more, the instruction and preparation of our minds, require such a respite from the common employments of life ; and that with the divine injunction to consecrate a portion of our time to his service, we are no more at liberty to bring that portion within our calculations of pleasure or business, than if it had been totally withdrawn, or placed irrevocably beyond our disposal. We do not complain, that the rest of midnight comes to interrupt our gains ;—we welcome its repose. Do our immortal souls less require release from the business and temptations of a distracting and corrupting world ? Is it urged, finally, that many, who thus pass the leisure of the Sabbath, are kept from worse employments ? We cannot perceive the soundness of the reasoning, that would defend and perpetuate one acknowledged abuse through fear of the possibility of another. It is, we believe, to mere habit and perhaps to an inconsiderate liberality of interpretation as to the duties of the Sabbath, that the disorder we lament is chiefly to be ascribed ; and we have too much deference for the principles and characters of a large proportion of those, who are found in these resorts, not to believe, that they would regard with pain, and scrupulously refuse the sanction of their example to what ever should *appear to them* inconsistent with the obligations of the day.

But we have remarked, that in our confidence of the general order and sobriety of the community, there is danger lest we insensibly admit abuses, which to a reflecting stranger would at once be glaring and offensive. And we feel it our duty here to refer to an abuse, which to our deep regret is still permitted among us, of the *publication of a Newspaper on Sunday mornings*. We had trusted, after the attention, which had been excited to the subject, that the reflexion and religious spirit of the community would have discouraged what we think can be regarded by every good citizen in no other light than as a gross violation of the sacredness of this day. With the question of private interest we can have no concern. It is totally

sunk in the consideration of the injurious influence upon society. We presume no one will urge its necessity. In this peaceful period of our country and of the world, what news can reach us to justify the indecorum of issuing and distributing a Newspaper on the Sabbath? Our citizens cannot need it for their gratification or employment; the reading of a public journal at such an hour can answer no better purpose than to prevent the reading of religious books, to distract the thoughts, perhaps to prevent attendance on church, or to carry us thither with the cares and passions, the tumults and the hopes of a distracting world. We have learnt, that this town stands alone in the responsibility of such an abuse; and that whatever may be urged as to the indispensable labour of the printing-offices, no Paper is *issued or distributed* during the Sabbath in any other of our cities. We have only fulfilled a duty inviting the attention of our readers to the subject; and it would be with deep regret, that we should find ourselves called to repeat a remonstrance against a disorder, so injurious to our religious character as a town, and so wounding to the most enlightened and serious portion of our community.

UNITARIAN EXPOSITOR.

No. I.

UNDER this head we intend to give explanations of some of the texts which are adduced as strongest in support of the Trinitarian doctrine. We suppose no one will be unwilling to admit, that the prevailing tenour of scripture is in favour of the proper unity of God, and that, but for a comparatively inconsiderable number of texts, the theory of a trinity of persons would, before now, have been discarded.* As Unitarians, we of course believe, that the real sense of these passages is not inconsistent with Unitarian views, and we wish in shewing this to remove a stumbling-block. The plan which we propose to follow, until we see good reason for changing it, is to remark; 1. On some of the passages which are brought in support of the doctrine of a trinity of persons; 2. On some of those which are understood to prove the deity and distinct personality of the Holy Spirit; and 3. On some of those which are

* We do not say,—would *never have been received*; for we have no idea that it had its origin even in mistaken views of revelation; but in a source entirely distinct.

understood to shew the deity of Christ. We shall avail ourselves at will of the labours of others, and shall generally include our remarks under this head within a short compass, both to avoid being tedious, and that they may be the better remembered.

Two of the most noted texts which have been brought to shew a trinity of persons in the Godhead are, that of the three heavenly witnesses, and the form of baptism.

"There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." 1 John v. 7. These words are no part of the Bible. People in general are not aware of this fact; but there is not a clergyman in the nation, who is fit for his place, but knows it. By whom the verse was written we are ignorant; but it was not part of the original epistle, and was not written by St. John. No theological scholar who has the shadow of a reputation to lose, will now think, whatever be his theological views, of quoting it as authentic. "If it were worth while," says Griesbach, the trinitarian editor of the standard edition of the New Testament, "I could defend six hundred readings, the most worthless, and rejected by all, by testimonies and arguments equally numerous and strong, nay, far more so, than are those on which the advocates of the genuineness of this passage rely. Nor would the defenders of the genuine text have in those instances so many and weighty arguments to oppose to my vain attempt, as have been produced against the supporters of this verse." The Calvinistic editors of the Eclectic Review speak of it thus:

"Upon this we need not spend many words. It is found in no Greek Manuscript ancient or recent, except one to which we shall presently advert;—in no ancient Version, being interpolated only in the later transcripts of the Vulgate. Not one of the Greek Fathers recognizes it, though many of them collect every species and shadow of argument, down to the most allegorical and shockingly ridiculous, in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity,—though they often cite the words immediately contiguous both before and after,—and though, with immense labour and art, they extract from the next words the very sense which this passage has in following times been adduced to furnish. Of the Latin Fathers, not one* has quoted it, till

* It has been attempted to be shown that Tertullian and Cyprian have cited the last clause of v. 7. Our readers may be satisfied, on this subject, by referring to Griesbach Nov. Test. vol. ii. App. p. 13—15; or Porson's letters to Travis, 240—282; or Marsh's Michaelis, vol. iv. 421—424. See also, for a lamentable contrast, Travis's Letters, 3d ed. 82, 53, 75—128.

Eucherius of Lyons, in the middle of the fifth century ; and in his works *there is much reason to believe that it has been interpolated.*

“ Under these circumstances, we are unspeakably ashamed that any modern divines should have fought *pedibus et unguibus*, for the retention of a passage so indisputably spurious. We could adduce half a dozen or half a score passages of ample length, supported by *better* authority than this, but which are rejected in every printed edition and translation.

“ One Greek Manuscript we have said contains the clause. This is the Dublin, or Montfortianus ; a very recent MS. glaringly interpolated from the modern copies of the Vulgate, and distributed into the present division of chapters.”

The way in which this verse was introduced into the place which it yet to our shame holds in our printed Bibles, was this. When the first edition of the New Testament was printed under the patronage of Cardinal Ximenes, at Alcala, in Spain, this verse was inserted, either on the authority of some very modern Greek MS., or more probably on that of the Vulgate Latin, the authorized version of the Romish church ; into which version, either by fraud, or by the carelessness of a transcriber in transferring a commentary from the margin into the text, it had found its way sometime after the eighth century. Erasmus, who published his first edition about the same time with that of Cardinal Ximenes, Trinitarian as he was, was too conscientious to adulterate the word of God, and did not introduce the supposititious verse in question. Such a clamour, however, was raised, that in his third edition, he printed it, “ to remove,” as he expressly says himself, “ occasion of unfounded reproach.” The fifth edition of Erasmus, in which the verse was retained, was the basis of that of Stephens. This, in its turn, was the basis of that of Beza, which was the standard of our common English version. Thus this famous blunder of a scrivener, or fraud of a priest, goes out into the world, edition after edition, with all the authority of holy writ. It belongs to nobody to take it from its place, and there it stands, and will stand, a most eloquent refuter of all our pretences to reverence for the word of God. It is something however, that with so universal a consent of theological scholars, its spuriousness is acknowledged. Whatever sense critics might give to it, it was really with the great body of readers the main support of the doctrine of the trinity ; and with the exposure of its spuriousness, we doubt not, that doctrine has received its death blow. It may linger for a long time, but its fate is sealed.

“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in [or into] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Matt. xxviii. 19.—The sound of these words in the ear seems something like the trinity, but we are at a loss to know how one would proceed to deduce the doctrine from them. There are different paraphrases of them, but with very slight variation of sense. That which, on the whole, we prefer, is this; baptizing them into the faith revealed by the Father, communicated through the Son, and confirmed by gifts of the Holy Ghost. To be *baptized into*, or *into the name of*, a person, is to become by the form of baptism the proselyte or pupil of what he teaches. The Christian faith may with equal propriety be said to be taught by God, by his messenger, and by the spirit of holiness which fixes its truths in men’s minds. (Job xxxvi. 22. Mark vi. 34. 1 Cor. ii. 13.) And this without implying in the least that God’s messenger and witness are beings equal in power and glory with himself. A person who would collect such a sense from the words would be no more discriminating, than the Athenians, who thought that Paul was claiming worship for two strange Gods, when he spoke of Jesus and the resurrection. (Acts xvii. 18.)

What then is the argument founded on this verse? There is nothing said of the Son or the Holy Ghost being God, or of their being with the Father three persons and one God, which is the doctrine they are brought to support. Is it argued from the three persons being named in *such close connexion*, that they are the same being? One might conclude otherwise, from their being *separately* named. But if the reasoning be good, then are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Old Testament, the same being,—then are the spirit, the water, and the blood, (1 John v. 8.) the same thing.

Does the stress of the argument lie here then, that we cannot be baptized into the name of any but a person in the Godhead? This will not do. Tertullian speaks of baptism into repentance, into the remission of sins; and the apostle (Rom. vi. 3.) of baptism into the death of Christ, and of the Israelites being baptized into Moses (1 Cor. x. 2.)—Can we *become disciples* then of none but a person in the Godhead? Moses (John ix. 28.) John, (Matt. ix. 14.) and the Pharisees, (Matt. xxii. 16.) had theirs.—Can we *believe* in none else? The Israelites (Exod. xiv. 31.) believed [in] the Lord and in his servant Moses.

If those who deduce the doctrine of the trinity from this text, do not draw their inference in some of the ways we have noticed, we acknowledge ourselves ignorant in what way they draw it.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE LATE
REV. JOHN E. ABBOT.

THERE are some men whose characters belong to the public. They, whom providence has placed in a conspicuous station and who adorn that station with eminent virtues, may improve mankind by their example, and therefore their example belongs to mankind. Their history and character may do good, when they are no more, and should not be hidden. Although, therefore, we are no advocates for indiscriminate biography, and for laying open the private retirements of all good men, yet we conceive that there are cases of unquestionable propriety and even duty, when the example of those who have left us should be fully set forth, that men may see it, and be led to glorify our Father who is in heaven. There are few things which more affect, encourage, and animate the living, than to know how they endured and what they accomplished, who have gone before them in the path of glory.

We are unwilling, therefore, to suffer the late Rev. J. E. Abbot to sleep with his fathers, without endeavouring to perpetuate the remembrance of what he was, and exhibiting his character to the imitation of christians. To those who know him, no description or eulogium can adequately portray the image which remains upon their memories. There are traits which may be perceived and felt by the intimate observer, but which cannot be presented in language. We can attempt no more than to give the leading incidents of his short life, and so to display the beauty of his religious character, as to promote the cause of truth and piety.

JOHN EMERY ABBOT was born in Exeter, N. H., on the sixth of August, 1793. He seems to have been destined to the ministry from his very birth. His mother, whom he is said to have greatly resembled, and who lived but a few months after his birth, solemnly dedicated him to God before her death. The knowledge of this circumstance made an impression on his mind, and he seems never to have lost sight of his destination. His religious character commenced early; he probably never knew the time when he was destitute of religious impressions. The same amiableness of disposition and gentleness of demeanour marked his childhood, which characterized him when a man, and made him then, as he was always, an object of more than ordinary interest to those who knew him. "While in the Academy," says one of his schoolmates, "no one regarded him as capable of doing wrong—we looked on him as a purer being than others around him."

He completed his classical education at Bowdoin College, in Brunswick, Me. and was graduated with reputation in 1810, at the early age of seventeen. His college life appears to have been of a piece with his whole existence, unassuming and exemplary. At times however, his diffidence and self-distrust oppressed him with the idea, that he should disappoint the wishes of his friends, and become a useless being. He has since told a friend, that so great at one period was his despondency, that he would willingly have exchanged all his future hopes and prospects for the certainty of a living as a schoolmaster in some remote village; the office of a clergyman, although from his earliest recollection the object of his most ardent desires, appearing to him a situation of too much dignity for him to aspire to.

After leaving college, he soon commenced his preparation for the holy work to which his heart was always devoted, and pursued his theological studies partly at the University in Cambridge, and partly under the direction of the Rev. Wm. E. Channing, in Boston.—This term of preparatory discipline he passed with great diligence and fidelity. Religious truth was dear to his mind, and he entered with interest into those inquiries which are necessary to ascertain and define it, and without which the mind of a theologian is unfurnished. But there was one part of the ministerial preparation to which he attached supreme importance, and to which consequently his principal attention was directed. He thought the *religious character* of infinitely greater moment than all other qualifications of talents or acquirements. He had an extraordinary reverence for the sacred office, and dreaded above all things a diminution of that personal interest in religion, which alone can fit one for it, or make him useful in it. He believed, that the knowledge of human nature and of the modes of addressing and moving the conscience, which might be gained from the habitual study and discipline of his own heart, would be far more important to himself and to his flock, than laborious researches into some subjects connected with theology, which might make him more learned, but would be in danger of making him cold. And therefore, upon the principle that the affections are worth every thing to a religious man, and especially to a minister, it was his favourite aim and object to keep them alive. His wish was to be a good and useful, and never to be a great man; to this single object he bent his fine powers, and girded himself, like his master, *to go about doing good*. There was no selfish ambition in any of his plans; they all centered in the supreme desire to become a good minister. How much he had this at

heart, and what his favourite views of the profession were, may be seen from the following extract of a letter, written just before he began to preach.

"How soon I shall be presented for approval, I know not exactly. As I draw nearer the close of my course, I feel a greater importance to be thrown into the little time which remains before its termination. And the more I reflect, the more solemn appears the office of a shepherd of the christian flock. To enlighten the ignorant with truth, to guide the wandering and the doubting, to give hope to the penitent, and consolation to the sorrowing, and to arouse the sleep of the sinner, is indeed a blessed, but a most responsible office; and it seems the more solemn when we think that it is committed to '*earthen vessels*'—who themselves are ignorant and wandering, surrounded with temptations, darkened by error, and polluted with sin. It is a most animating thought, that he, who promised to his apostles, '*Lo, I am ever with you,*' forsakes not their feeble successors."

His sentiments and feelings in regard to his profession are yet more fully discovered in a letter written just after he began to preach. "By these active duties I hope to acquire a habit of more energy, and to gain something of practical wisdom, and to become a better member of society, and minister of the hopes and comforts of the gospel to the poor and sorrowing. My dear ———, what a holy and glorious profession has God permitted me to assume. I feel that it is a blessing for which I can never be grateful enough. Its duties seem to be those of the good spirits who are messengers of mercy and love to us; bearing consolation to the afflicted, and hope to the desponding, and warning to the wanderer, and animation and peace to the humble and penitent. I often feel that my earlier anticipations of the happiness of the profession are indeed surpassed."

With such views of the profession in which he was to labour, he entered upon its duties. With his talents, preparations, and earnestness, he could not fail to be acceptable, and he won many hearts and left deep impressions in the several places to which he was called to preach. There was no parade of oratory, no effort for effect, nothing done for display; but his simple, unaffected, and serious style of preaching, with the uncommon purity and solemnity of his devotional exercises, excited the best sort of interest, while his exemplariness as a man and devotedness to duty gave the promise of usefulness to the people with whom he should be united. When the pulpit of the North Church in Salem became vacant, by the

death of the venerable Dr. Barnard, the eyes of his people turned at once to Mr. Abbot as his successor. He preached to them, became acquainted with them, and was ordained as their minister on the 20th of April, 1815.

The trials of a clergyman's life are never small to a conscientious man, and in the place to which Mr. Abbot was called they were on some accounts peculiarly great. He succeeded an aged and experienced minister, who had gained the full confidence and affection of his flock by his intimacy and fidelity in parochial duties. Mr. Abbot's own inclinations and views of duty would lead him also to pay peculiar attention, and devote a large share of time, to this, the most trying and difficult part of ministerial labour. He had come to a large parish when not twenty-two years of age, with but little experience, and oppressed with a sense of responsibility. But he showed himself to be equal to the charge. "Young as he was," says one who knew him well, "he discovered at once the wisdom and prudence, which we should suppose could be the result of experience only." He secured to an uncommon degree the respect and attachment of his people, and his own love for his duties soon amounted, as he himself expressed it, almost to a passion. As far as was practicable he made himself personally known to every individual, interested himself as a friend in their welfare, was always by their side in perplexity and sorrow, and ready to make any sacrifices of personal ease for the sake of their good. At the same time he pursued his studies with diligence, and made especially the preparation of his sermons for the pulpit an object of chief attention. These were distinguished for the judgment with which the most impressive thoughts were selected and arranged, for great affectionateness and earnestness of address, and for a style of uniform neatness, purity, and beauty not often excelled. He wrote much besides them to assist himself in the course of his religious inquiries, but not with a view to publication, and engaged but little in studies not connected with his profession, though he was a good classical scholar, and always fond of elegant literature.

His frame was too feeble to support this various load of cares. He had never been robust; and the duties which he pursued with so much ardor, insensibly diverted his attention from the care of himself. In the spring of 1817, his health was evidently impaired; and a little cough, which seemed alarming to some of his friends, but too slight to attract his own attention, followed him through the summer. In October he took a little journey to the south, which injured instead of benefiting him. He felt it his duty, feeble as he was, to preach

in the Unitarian church at Philadelphia, and on his return the weather was cold and stormy; he took a severe cold which settled upon his lungs with a violent cough, and was accompanied with bleeding. Fearing lest he should become too weak to reach home, he pressed on with injudicious rapidity. On the day after his arrival in Salem, the first Sabbath in November, he preached to his people. The weather was tempestuous. His utterance was interrupted by a perpetual cough; and the service of the holy communion, which he administered for the last time, was a season of distress to his church, and full of the saddest forebodings. He was too ill to attend worship in the afternoon, and from that time appeared to be in a rapid decline. During the winter he was confined to his chamber, and principally to his bed; his weakness was extreme; his voice only a whisper; and he believed himself to be a dying man. But there was nothing in him of distress, agitation, or gloom; he was the same tranquil and cheerful man that he had been in health. His unwillingness to speak of himself, and his great aversion to talking much of what was passing within him, which was always a prominent trait in his modest character, prevented his conversing much, or to many persons, of his feelings and prospects. He knew that religion did not consist in being forward to tell the secrets of the soul. He did not conceal, however, from those friends who had a right to know his thoughts, that he thought his days were numbered; and to a friend, who often watched with him, he spake frequently without reserve; dwelt upon the thought of dying with perfect calmness; expressed with energy the satisfaction and peace which he derived from the views of religion he had imbibed and preached; and especially from those affectionate and confiding sentiments respecting the essential goodness of God, which had always laid at the foundation of his piety and hope.

On the approach of spring, appearances were more favourable, and he removed to Exeter. There he spent the summer with his parents, and his strength was so far restored, that he contemplated a return to his ministerial labours in the autumn. A letter, which he wrote in July to an intimate friend, presents a beautiful exemplification of his habitual piety. "I think," he says, "that I gain strength, and now cannot but rejoice in the hope, which for so long a time I felt it necessary to check as it rose, of being again permitted to minister the gospel to my beloved people. In this restoration I see the *direct* agency of Him, who first breathed into me the breath of life; the skill of man and the powers of medicine seemed all in vain; it was *his* air, the warmth of *his* sun, the bright and cheering pros-

pects of the earth which *his* goodness quickened and beautified, which thus far have dispelled the damps of disease, and enkindled the feeble and dying flame within me. I suppose that every person, when restored from sickness, flatters himself that the feelings of piety, which deliverance awakens, will not decay. God grant that mine may be as permanent and influential as they ought to be!"

In another letter he speaks thus of his attendance on public worship, which he was just able to renew. "I could not help my mind from wandering much away, and being filled with recollections of the past years of my own life; for I had not been present at the ordinance since that distressful day, when I last met our own church at the altar. I think there is no time when the heart more expands towards all present or distant, whom God has made dear to it, than when commemorating that greater friend, whose love was stronger than death."

But the approach of autumn proved these flattering expectations to be delusive. His cough, which had never left him, became again alarming, and it was thought expedient that he should spend the winter in a warmer climate. He acquiesced in the measure, but did not greatly desire it. "Life for its own sake," he said, "was scarcely worth preserving at such a price; but he was not his own; and he felt it to be a duty to use every means which presented a hope that he might be restored to his people." On the eighth of November he sailed for Havana, to spend the winter with a friend in that place. But all hope of benefit from this step was disappointed. His voyage was rough and fatiguing; and although, as he very gratefully acknowledges in his journal, every possible attention was paid to his accommodation and comfort, he yet suffered much. "Upon the whole," he writes after his arrival, "I have been disappointed in regard to the voyage. My cough is somewhat increased and my strength lessened." His residence upon the island was not more salutary. The kindest attentions of devoted friends were vain. It was soon found hazardous for him to remain within the walls of the city, and he quitted the hospitable dwelling of the old friend with whom he at first resided, for a lodging among strangers in the country. He felt that nothing had been gained, and he sometimes said so; but no complaint ever escaped his lips, no look of discontent overspread his countenance. And when it was mentioned as a subject of regret that he had quitted his country, he said, "By no means; that he considered it the peculiar appointment of Providence, and, whatever might be the event, he would not alter a single circumstance if he could."

A minute account of his residence in Cuba would be exceedingly interesting. There was not a day of his exile, says the friend who accompanied him, that he was not a subject for home and a nurse; yet his mind was tranquil and active as when in health. He commenced a journal when he left home, which he continued until increasing weakness compelled him to relinquish it thirteen days after his arrival. What he wrote is interesting from its minute descriptions of scenes and events, and as it shows that he was alive to all around him, and could observe and reflect as he always did. His remarks upon the character and influence of the Roman Catholic superstitions, concerning which he made full inquiry and observation; upon the state of morals; and upon the great evils which result from making the Sabbath a day of amusement; are truly creditable to his talents and piety, and almost wonderful, when it is considered that he was so feeble as to be utterly exhausted by the effort required to write a few pages. But he was one who never would suffer the opportunity of improving his mind or his heart to pass by. He formed an acquaintance with several Friars of distinction, with whom he used to converse by means of a pencil in Latin; one of whom, of superior rank and fortune, became greatly attached to him, and daily exchanged visits. Through him he was received with hospitality at the convent of which he was a member, obtained access to the library, with liberty to borrow books, and was requested to visit freely at all times. He visited the prison, the slave-market, and the burial place of Americans, where he attended the funeral of a young man, a fellow passenger, and other similar places of suffering. When the fatigue attendant on such exertions was named to him, he replied, that it was the duty of a clergyman to make himself familiar with such scenes, as they fitted him for the better discharge of his duty. So much had he at heart the one object of being a useful minister.

But the increasing heat of the weather soon rendered it impossible for him to take the necessary exercise, and his strength hourly decayed; when, in one of those sudden changes to which the climate is subject, but against which man has made insufficient provision, he took a severe cold which threatened a speedy termination to his sufferings. As soon as he was a little relieved, he embarked for Charleston, S. C. The sea breeze in some degree restored his appetite and strength; and when he arrived, the sensation, which every one feels on treading again his native shore, gave a stimulus to his exhausted frame, which he mistook for returning health. He immediately found kind and devoted friends, though he came to them a

stranger, and received every comfort which the most affectionate and tender sympathy could bestow. But he soon found that his feelings had deceived him, and his spirits sunk for a moment under the pressure of disease, and disappointed hope, and the delay in returning home, occasioned by the lateness of the New England spring. On it being remarked to him that he was in low spirits, he answered, "No; not in low spirits, but sober. I think it very doubtful whether I am ever any better, and it is time for me now to consider myself a stranger and pilgrim on earth." He would often say, "O that I had wings like a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest." He sometimes regretted the distraction of mind produced by travelling, and said there was great justice in the remark of Jeremy Taylor, that "no one can be devout who leads a wandering life." The thought of dying was evidently familiar to him. As he was riding one fine morning, he applied to himself the lines written by Michael Bruce, just before his death:—

Now spring returns—but not to me returns
The vernal joys my better years have known;
Dim in my breast life's dying taper burns,
And all the joys of life with health are flown.

Yet in the midst of a weakness and langour which might have excused him for attending exclusively to himself, he engaged in teaching the slave, who waited upon him, to read.

When the weather became hot in the middle of April, he left Charleston and reached Philadelphia by packet on the 22d, so much reduced that it was thought doubtful whether he could live to reach home. His father and several friends met him there. Their presence produced a temporary exhilaration of spirits, but his strength was rapidly decreasing, and from that time he could speak only in a whisper.

He arrived in Exeter, at the abode of his parents, in June. During the summer his decline was certain but gradual. He had too long contemplated the event to be moved by it. His whole demeanor remained collected and tranquil. There was a quietness in his manner, a placid gentleness in every look and word which came from him, which discovered that death had no terrors to sadden or deject him, and that he had no duty now but to withdraw his interest from earthly things, and "prune his flight for heaven." The same desire to save others from pain, which had always been eminently characteristic of him, prevented him for a long time from speaking of his death to the friends who were with him, and made him reluc-

tant to convey even by any thing in his manner, that he thought himself so near his departure. But about a fortnight before his death, he communicated to his father his belief that all hope of recovery was passed; said, that he had long since relinquished hope; that he had wished to live that he might be useful to his parish, and that he might be instrumental in communicating religious instruction to his brother and sister; but he was convinced that for the wisest and best reasons this was not permitted, and he perfectly acquiesced. After this disclosure his mind seemed relieved. Every thing indicated composure of spirit and a quiet waiting to be gone. He was for the most part spared much pain, and the powers of his mind remained perfectly unimpaired. During the last week of his life he listened occasionally, in the little time in which his extreme exhaustion would suffer him to command his attention, to passages from the Bible and other pious books; and never omitted his habit of retiring to his devotions, till a few days before his death. Two days previous to that event, he made a memorandum in writing of several little things, which he wished should be given as remembrances to some of his friends; and renewed the request, which he had made on leaving the country, that a certain part of his library, containing his most valuable theological books, should be given to his church for the use of their future ministers.* In the night of October 6th his complaints increased, and his dissolution was evidently near. Toward morning he passed through a severe paroxysm of pain, and his breath afterward grew shorter. He called his brother to him, and bade him look upon him, and see what religion would do for man at the hour of death. When the time of his departure came, he was sensible of its arrival, and calmly said, "Mother, I am going to leave you." He kissed her, and said, "Where is my father." When his father came he gave him also a parting kiss, and then, looking up to heaven, pronounced in an audible, distinct voice, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." No other words were heard but the ejaculation, "Blessed Jesus—" He requested to remain quiet, and his eyes were still raised, as in prayer, when he gently ceased to breathe. Thus he died as he lived, in

* The following is a memorandum which he made when he sailed for Havana:

"I wish to leave all those books, which are marked in the catalogue which I handed you, to the North Society, for the use of their pastor for the time being. In this way I hope that when I shall speak to my beloved people no more, I may still, in a remote manner, be doing good to them and to their children."

every thing consistent, in every thing beautiful. He was indeed ripened for a better world. His career was short, but few men will live to do more for religion. One such example of the power of Christianity to purify and exalt the character, and to throw a heavenly lustre over the bed of death, is worth many longer lives of ministerial usefulness.

I have been thus minute in the details of Mr. Abbot's life, because it appeared to me that his character could be fairly drawn only by thus making it speak for itself. A formal description of it would convey but a general and faint idea of what he was, and be quite insufficient in liveliness and truth. His was strictly, and without mixture, a religious character. There appeared in him a peculiar maturity of those graces, which distinguish the *Christian* from all other morality. He might well be called, in that expressive phrase which Dr. Buchanan has recorded, "A MAN OF THE BEATITUDES." You saw upon the slightest acquaintance, that he had formed himself with care on the example of his Master, and that it was his aim to be always like him gentle, meek, humble, and tranquil. His natural dispositions and temper were undoubtedly good; he neither exemplified nor believed the doctrine of man's original depravity. His mind was finely strung, and its powers nicely balanced; and God seems to have given him no strength of passion, except sensibility. His sensibility was acute and delicate. Perhaps of this part of himself he was not sufficiently master; but it contributed to make him a very interesting man. It gave a great glow and ardour to his friendship, and made his attachments strong and pure. It gave him great zeal in his religion, and probably influenced him to consider it, so much as he did, a matter of the affections. He valued its purifying, elevating, and consoling influences on the heart, as the great object and design of the gospel. He could not bear that it should run into literary or metaphysical speculations, or be wasted upon any thing which has a tendency to cool the fervour of the spirit, or repress the warmth of the affections. But there was nothing of extreme animation, nothing loud and furious in his fervour. Religion was emphatically with him *the still, small voice*; all within and without obeyed it, but without any bustle or ostentation; it was always sober and calm, except when occasionally it excited to excess the gentler emotions, and checked his utterance, and found vent in tears. This, which describes his general character, is a description also of his preaching. He perhaps never was vehement, and seldom touched the strings of the stronger passions; but he always interested you, and his sentiments

came upon your soul like the mild fanning of a sweet breeze, and you forgot to ask whether he was eloquent; and you perceived how much he was engaged, not by the power of his declamation or the violence of his gesture, but by the quivering of his lip, and the filling of his eye, and his interrupted utterance.

These qualities rendered him particularly engaging in the pastoral duties of his office. His tenderness and sensibility soothed those whom he visited in trouble, and rendered him deservedly dear to his flock; while the evident sincerity and depth of his piety wrought as an example to promote their devotion; teaching them by his own devout and serious, yet cheerful deportment, to make religion the constant and intimate friend of their lives. His devotedness to them was great. He made their interests his own, and appeared to have no wishes, pursuits, or plans, with which they were not associated. A separation from them was the only subject on which he could not speak to the last without emotion. Of death he conversed calmly; but when he thought of his people he was moved. "On this subject" (he says, in a letter from Charleston, March 3, 1819) "I must think and feel in silence. I have not yet sufficient self-command to speak to any one of my fears and hopes; and hardly dare trust myself yet to look steadily forward to the possibilities of the future. Before I was sick, perhaps I might have had more firmness of heart; but the numberless and unexpected expressions of kind interest which the season of my calamity has called forth from those, whose affections I desired most earnestly to conciliate, have created and nourished feelings, which I can never lose, and strive as yet in vain rightly to regulate." His sensibility upon this topic remained, when every other earthly object seemed to be merged in the thought of heaven; and the constant, kind, and delicate attentions of the people he so much loved, were in the highest degree grateful and soothing.

It is not strange that to such a man his friends should be warmly attached; and the energy with which they speak of him, forms the most unsuspecting eulogium of his worth. They seem to labour for expressions that shall adequately convey their sense of his excellence; even they who knew him from infancy, who have been familiar with him at every period of his life, who were grown when he was a boy, and have watched the whole progress of his character, regard him with a sort of veneration, as if he were a purer being than commonly visit earth. Such is the fascinating power of a character consistently religious! The proverb did not hold true in respect to him,

that no one is great to his intimates;* for it is they, chiefly, that looked upon him with wonder. They say, that although being human, he must have had his faults, yet they never discovered them, and cannot tell what they were.

Habitual and fervent piety was his ruling principle. It was his settled reverence for the Divine character, and his trust in the perfect wisdom and goodness of providence, that supported his perpetual evenness of disposition, and gave him so much resignation and cheerfulness in the long trial of his sickness, and his weary approach to the tomb. During his voyage, when his nights were made restless by his cough and boisterous weather, his mind, he said, was tranquillized by the recollection of passages from the Psalms; and he remarked on their wonderful adaptation to every season and circumstance of affliction. He mentioned also the pleasure he took in repeating that beautiful hymn of Mrs. Steele, which begins thus:

"O Lord, my best desires fulfill,
And teach me to resign
Life, health, and comfort to thy will—
And be thy pleasure mine."

The sentiment of this hymn expresses the habitual temper of his mind.

I do not believe that he had a particle of asperity in him. He indulged no ill will; he would not willingly hurt the feelings of the meanest, and never allowed himself to feel uncharitably toward those who differed from him. He was truly liberal; although perfectly decided in his own opinions, and in his aversion to some systems as corruptions of the gospel and of injurious tendency, yet he unfailingly spoke of those who held such views with tenderness and respect; he allowed them readily the excellencies that belonged to them, and found pleasure in commending where commendation was due.

The views of the Christian religion, on which a character so truly christian was built, and to which he held with unaltered and even increasing satisfaction to the last, were simple and unperplexed. He loved to regard the gospel as a gift to all men of every condition and capacity, which the simplest might understand, and every one alike practice. Its great, important, essential doctrines, he believed to be very few and very plain, and grieved that they should have been so much darkened by words without knowledge. In accordance with

* Hannah More has applied it to *Christians*, once in its full extent, and once as follows: "It requires as much circumspection to be a *Christian* as to be 'a hero to one's valet-de-chambre.'"

this, he observed, after his partial recovery from his first confinement, that the truths, which he then found important to him, were exceedingly few; and that, to which he clung for support, when from extreme debility his mind was incapable of retaining another idea, was, that salvation had come to him by Jesus Christ.

He was a decided Unitarian upon principle and from inquiry. He believed the doctrine of the single and unapproached supremacy of the Father, to be a clear and most important doctrine of revealed religion. He honoured Jesus as the Son and messenger of God, and believed that he had an existence before he entered our world; he never spake of him but in terms of veneration and love; but he reserved his *worship* for the Father. Him he delighted to contemplate and speak of in his paternal character; his goodness, universal and impartial, he believed to be essential to his perfection and glory, and was perpetually displaying it in his preaching to the adoration and love of his people. He had no belief that He had formed any being necessarily evil, and incapable by nature of pleasing him; or that he suffers men to come into existence subject, to a corruption which they cannot remove; on account of which they are to perish forever, except He please of his own mercy to prevent it; and that this mercy He will exert only in favour of a few elect. He knew that the scriptures did not teach him this, he felt that reason and conscience and the affections of the heart revolt from it, and he was sure that it appeared to attribute a dishonourable government to the God of mercy. He on the contrary, believed that all men are placed on an equal footing, to be tried with an impartial trial, and judged with an impartial judgment; that none are excluded from the benefits of the gospel; and that nothing but an abuse of the means, which are put in every man's power, can deprive any one of that immortality for which he is created. Hence his preaching was affectionate; he endeavoured to move by representations of the astonishing goodness and mercy of God, and to win by accents of kindness. He did not neglect, however, occasionally to urge the terrors of the Lord. But he did it as "a strange work," with a faltering voice and quivering lip,* and was once so affected by the subject that his emotion obliged him to pause and recover himself.

His views of the christian life were exceedingly exalted, and he insisted upon a very pure and rigid standard of moral excellence. "It seems to me," he says, "that very much of the

* See a fine passage in Robert Hall's Sermons.

want of religious principle and conduct among men is owing to their want of conviction how hard it is to become a sincere and obedient follower of Christ. We are apt to think too little of the extent and variety of religious obligations, and the difficulties and trials, the sorrows and temptations, which render it so necessary to work with earnestness. We are in no danger of exerting too much self-denial, or maintaining too unearthly a temper, for we are called upon to be *perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect.*"

His opinion in regard to the dependence of future felicity on character, and the manner in which the gospel prepares for it, is so well stated in the following paragraph, and was so important in its influence upon his whole religious system, that we cannot forbear the gratification of copying it. It is from a letter without date.—"The design of all the obedience which the gospel requires, of its precepts, rules, and spirit, is to form us to a certain character, to certain habits and feelings, which are the *qualifications* for a spiritual state hereafter. When we think of the present world, it is evident, that in order to rightly discharging the services relating to it, in order to enjoy the blessings and comforts it yields, we need a peculiar kind of character,—a character *adapted* to this world. It is thus with regard to a future state; in order to be qualified for its services and joys, we need to have certain habits, dispositions, capacities,—without which, we should be unqualified to perform its services, or share its joys. Death makes no change in our character,—it only alters the *state* of our existence; and we shall enter a future world with the same habits, feelings, tempers, with which we departed from this. And the great design of the gospel is, by enjoining certain acts, and inculcating certain dispositions, to train us up to that character which is meet for the inheritance of the saints."

It would be easy to go on and multiply extracts, which should make still more complete the delineation of his character and opinions; but it is time to forbear. The memory of what he was can never pass away from the minds of his friends and people; and we have done enough perhaps in our endeavour so to make him known, as shall promote the interests of religion.

As such a character is valuable to all christians, so it is especially to those, who are pursuing their preparation for the sacred ministry. The cause of truth and human improvement rejoices in the services of such men; and let them go forth to the labours of the church thus exemplary and blameless themselves, and they need not fear to be disappointed or overthrown. Let them make it their first care to *live* the gospel, and they cannot be unsuccessful in preaching it.

And while such men are formed beneath the influence of the plain and simple doctrines of Unitarianism, let none be so absurd as to believe, that they deny all which is vital and sanctifying in the gospel. Who can look upon such, and not be persuaded, that this faith is abundantly sufficient to all the wants of the soul; that man does not need mysterious and unintelligible dogmas to excite a reverence for God, and keep piety alive; but that the virtues and graces, which most adorn man, and which are by all Christians most valued as the genuine fruits of their religion, may spring up and flourish and become mature under the influence of a system, which has been branded as cold, heartless, and impious—as the offspring of boasting reason, and little better than infidel philosophy. If our Lord was right in declaring that false prophets should be known by their fruits, who will pronounce *this* man a false prophet? And who, with an ordinary share of candour, will refuse to acknowledge, that that MAY, at least, be the truth of God, which has proved so abundant in the fruits of his spirit?—For ourselves, we rest upon it with perfect confidence; we rejoice in it as the WISDOM OF GOD, AND THE POWER OF GOD; it has supported many, who have gone before us, amid duty, trial, and danger, and been to them as the rod and staff of God in the shadow of death. We humbly trust that it will equally sustain us; and although every where spoken against, and treated by our brethren as a denial of the faith, we will not cease to love it, or shrink from defending it, as the truth which is to save; we are satisfied to be companions of such men as Abbot; and turning from the judgment of man will say, *Our witness is in Heaven; our record is on high.**

UNITARIAN EXPOSITOR.

No. II.

WE are induced to break in upon our plan, and give a second article under this head, for the sake of noticing the following extracts from letters of a highly respected friend, who has recently renounced the error of the Trinity.

* The writer of this article is indebted to the kindness of several friends, whose communications have assisted him in preparing it, and whose language he has occasionally interwoven with his own, when it could not be altered without injury to the sense.

“Though I am fully satisfied that the doctrine of the trinity, and that of the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ, are not agreeable to the general tenour of the scriptures, yet there are some passages, on which I should be glad to see some explanatory remarks. Two passages of this kind, which I now recollect, I will mention to you; hoping that from you, or through the medium of the Christian Disciple, or from some other source, I may obtain a better view of them.

“Heb. i. 10. ‘And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning, &c.’ Notwithstanding the remarks of Mr. Yates, this verse appears to me to be an address from the Father to the Son. But in Psalm cii. 25, of which the passage is a quotation, it appears to be an address of the Psalmist to Jehovah; and, were it not for the application of the passage by the Apostle, I should say, it appears to be an address of the Psalmist to the supreme God. What is the best way of explaining this verse, in connexion with the passage, from which it is quoted?

“Rev. i. 17. ‘I am the first and the last.’ Also, ii. 8. That this phrase is applied to Christ there will probably be no doubt. Respecting the propriety of applying it to a derived being, I feel a difficulty. If the foregoing remarks should be the occasion of directing the attention of some writer for the Christian Disciple, to the difficulties there suggested, the information thus conveyed might benefit many.”

“I will take the liberty of stating another subject, in which I find great difficulty, and which I should be glad to see fairly explained. I refer to the fact, (so I venture to call it, for so it seems to be,) that the Angel of the Lord appeared on several occasions, and yet spoke as though he were God or Jehovah. See Gen. xviii. xxii. 11. 12. xxxi. 11. 13. xlviii. 15. 16. Ex. iii. You know, that Trinitarians consider this Angel to be the second person in the Godhead, and therefore suppose, that he is consistently called both Jehovah, and the Angel of Jehovah. It is true, that this doctrine necessarily implies, either, that he is the Messenger of himself, or that there are two Jehovahs, one sent by the other. I know not which of these consequences they would choose; though probably they would deny both. However that may be, I should wish to go further, than barely to throw a difficulty in their way; I should wish to give a fair explanation of the passages, in which that phraseology occurs, and to shew that they are similar to others, in which the speaker is confessedly not God, and yet speaks in the name, or uses the style of God, without the formal introduction, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ Did the Angel speak in the

name of Jehovah? Or was there a special symbol of the divine presence, which might be called the Angel of Jehovah?"

"Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they shall all wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."—Heb. i. 10.

By some the Apostle is understood as addressing these words to God. By others he is understood to represent God as addressing them to his Son. No grammatical difficulty is in the way of either of these interpretations. So far as the structure of the sentence goes, one is as probable as the other. We must proceed therefore to other considerations to decide which to select. The Apostle has been speaking of the dignity of Christ, and adducing passages from the Old Testament in proof of it. These words are quoted from the Psalms. If then the Psalmist can be considered as referring in them to our Lord, the Apostle also may be understood to make this application of them. But if the sense of the passage in the Psalms is irreconcilable with this supposition, and there is a pertinent sense consistent with their primary design, in which the words may be employed by the Apostle, we cannot hesitate to prefer it. We think it will be made obvious by reading the Psalm with attention, that the words preclude entirely the supposition of any other sense, than that of an address of the author to God, and that to suppose the Apostle to have adopted them in any other, and above all as a proof passage, is to suppose a glaring incongruity.

If used then by St. Paul in the same signification which they had originally, will they give a pertinent sense? We think, not only a pertinent, but a forcible and beautiful one. We understand the Apostle as shewing the stability of Christ's kingdom, by declaring, after the Psalmist, that God is its support, and that this God is eternal, the same that "in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth" &c. Unto the Son it is said, God is thy throne for ever and ever, &c. And thou, Lord, [who art his throne or support] in the beginning hast laid, &c.*

"And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."—Rev. i. 17. "These expressions," says Yates, who, we think, interprets them rightly, "signify that Jesus Christ is contemporary with the earliest

* See *Disciple*, New Series, vol. I. p. 421. Note.

and latest events in that dispensation over which he has been ordained by the Almighty to preside." Our Lord declares in substance the same thing concerning himself, which the Apostle declares concerning him (Heb. xii. 2.) that he is "the author and finisher of our faith." Or he may be understood to say,—in connexion with the clause in the next verse, "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death,"—that though when on earth he was the last, that is, the meanest and most despised of beings. (Isa. liii. 3.) he was now the first, that is, the greatest of all, being exalted at the right hand of God. (Comp. Matt. xx. 16.) To bring the words in proof of his deity is to dispute his own authority. He has himself expressly precluded this application of them. "When I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not; for I am *thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book, WORSHIP GOD.*—And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*" (Rev. xxii. 8, 9. 12, 13.)

We are willing, though it may be thought superfluous, to fortify our ground—that this text does nothing to support the tenet of the deity of Christ—by trinitarian aid. "By the phrase, *beginning and end*, in the Apocalypse," says Erasmus, (ad loc. John viii. 25) "it is well known that we must understand, that Christ is the commencement, and the completion of his church; that he founded it at his first coming, and will perfect it at his last." And in opposition to the idea which has been entertained that the words *the first and the last*, denote independent existence, Calvin remarks on them (ad loc. Esai. xlv. 6.) "The prophet does not declare in these words the eternity of God, but his consistency with himself, so that he might be expected to be in time to come, what he had been experienced to be in time past." And again; (Esai. xlviii. 12.) "he teaches nothing but that God is always consistent with himself; that neither his character nor his designs change like those of men; therefore he declares himself to be the first and last. It is to be observed, that Isaiah is not speaking of God's eternity."

In the other passages referred to by our correspondent, the angel of the Lord is said to have appeared, and "spoken as though he were God or Jehovah." We are asked to give an account of this form of speech.

God is an invisible, omnipresent spirit. (1 Tim. vi. 16. Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8, 9, 10.) When he exhibits himself to men, it is by means of some symbol, or representation to the senses; and this, whatever it be, through which he appears or speaks, is called in scripture, the *angel* or *messenger* of God. Prophets and priests are called so, (Hag. i. 13. Mal. ii. 7. ;) and some understand the winds to have this epithet applied to them (Ps. civ. 4.) Now it is obvious, that no shape, angelic, human, or inanimate, through which it may please God to communicate with men, can comprehend the illimitable divinity. When His will is declared through a prophet, whose authority is acknowledged, it seems most natural that the prophet should deliver the message in his own name, declaring it to have been received from God. But when any other instrument is used, either a supernatural appearance, or some familiar form of material nature, it seems equally to be expected that God should speak in his own person. In this latter case, the phraseology does not strike us as peculiar,—why should it in the former? We are told,—to give a few of many instances of the same sort,—of God's *calling* to Moses out of the mountain (Exod. xix. 3.) of his *coming* to Elijah by a voice (1 Kings xix. 13.) where a form of words remarkably similar is employed; of his answering Job out of the whirlwind (xxxviii. 1. xl. 6.) and of his attesting the mission of his son from heaven (Matt. iii. 17.) We find no difficulty in the form of language in which God is said to speak from a mountain or a whirlwind. We apprehend that in which he is said to speak by an angel to be precisely parallel. He is with equal propriety represented as *himself speaking*, in one as in the other.

We are not aware of any difficulty remaining. If however there be one, we do not see how in any degree it is diminished by the supposition of the angel of the Lord being identical with a second person in the Godhead; far less, how it can be employed to prove that such a person exists. If the Son be "very God of very God," "equal in power and glory with the Father," we do not see how the title *angel of the Lord*, could be applied to him with propriety in any sense in which it might not equally be applied to the Father. Of course we do not see how the use of the phrase can be supposed to imply any thing in support of the dogma of a distinction of persons. Nor do we apprehend that the angel of the Lord, by whom he spoke, can be affirmed to be a person in the Godhead by any argument, which might not with equal colour of truth be employed to shew the same thing concerning the mountain, the voice, the whirlwind, and the cloud, in the passages referred to in the last paragraph.

We feel the more confidence in our opinion that these passages have no bearing on the trinitarian doctrine, from its coinciding with that of two great reformers. "If," says Luther, "there were no other proof of the trinity than this, I should not believe it." "As to the argument of some ancient writers," says Calvin, "that Abraham discerned by faith three persons in the Godhead, because he worshipped one of the three whom he had seen, it is better not to use it, as it is frivolous, and liable to cavil and ridicule." (See also 1 Kings v. 2, 3, 8. Luke vii. 6.)

MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS.

BISHOP WATSON'S ACCOUNT OF HIS METHOD OF STUDYING DIVINITY.*

"I REDUCED the study of divinity into as narrow a compass as I could, for I determined to study nothing but my bible, being much unconcerned about the opinions of councils, fathers, churches, bishops, and other men, as little inspired as myself. This mode of proceeding being opposite to the general one, and especially to that of the Master of Peterhouse, who was a great reader, he used to call me the self-taught divine. It had been thought to be a duty to demolish every opinion, which militated against what is called the *orthodoxy* of the Church of England. Now my mind was wholly unbiassed : I had no prejudice against, no predilection for the Church of England ; but a sincere regard for the Church of *Christ*, and an insuperable objection to every degree of dogmatical intolerance. I never troubled myself with answering any arguments, which the opponents in the divinity schools brought against the articles of the Church, nor ever admitted their authority as decisive of a difficulty : but I used to say to them, holding the New Testament in my hand, *Behold the sacred book*. Here is the fountain of truth ; why do you follow the streams derived from it by the sophistry, or polluted by the passions of men ? If you can bring proofs against any thing delivered in this book, I shall think it my duty to reply to you ; articles of churches are not of divine authority ; have done with them : they may be true, they may be false ; and appeal to the sacred volume itself. This mode of disputing gained me no credit with the hierarchy,

* Bishop Watson's Life, p. 37, American edition.

but I thought it an honest one, and it produced a liberal spirit in the University."

RELIGION.

"Religion seems to be as necessary to mankind as water; the purest of both is the most salutary—yet in that state neither please the vulgar palate. In all ages mankind have been fond of adulterating both with foreign ingredients; those ingredients are often of an intoxicating quality, which perverts their beneficial nature, heats the brain, renders men quarrelsome, sometimes furious, and makes what was intended as a blessing, operate as a curse."

LOCKE AND NEWTON.

In Hannah More's last work, is the following passage:

"By these same simple truths, martyrs and confessors, our persecuted saints, and our blessed reformers, were saved. By these few simple truths, Locke, and Boyle, and Newton, were saved; not because they saw their religion through the glass of their philosophy, but because theirs was not 'a philosophy, falsely so called;' nor their science, 'a science of opposition;' but a science and a philosophy which were made subservient to Christianity, and because their deep humility sanctified their astonishing powers of mind. These wonderful men, at whose feet the learned world is still satisfied to sit, sat themselves at the feet of Jesus."

Locke and Newton are here set by the side of the martyrs, saints, and reformers, and declared to have been saved by the *same simple truths*. Yet Mrs. More could not have been ignorant that they were Unitarians. It is exceedingly comforting to read passages like this,—and not a few such are to be found in the writings of the orthodox—for they confirm us in the truth of the sentiment on which we love to dwell, that after all the division and intolerance of the christian world, there are **A FEW SIMPLE TRUTHS** in which all unite as essential, and which all, when the spirit of sect is not upon them, regard as *alone* essential, sufficient for the most heretical philosopher, as well as the most orthodox reformer. It is comforting also to find, that heresy will not keep good men forever out of the pale of the church, but when the generation has passed away in which they lived, and the controversies of the age are forgot-

ten, they will be acknowledged by all and honoured by all ; even those, who persecute the men who tread in their steps, and denounce their opinions as 'another gospel,' will speak of them with reverence as lights of the world. Those that have no language too vile for Priestley, are continually loud in the praise of Newton, who held his most obnoxious tenet ; and they that think a short creed to be little better than infidelity in disguise, place Locke, who wrote in defence of that same short creed, among the most eminent of believers. When *Christianity* is to be urged upon the sceptical, or the authority of great names is for any reason important, the appeal is always made at once, by Christians of every name, to Locke and Newton. This is as it should be ; it is a joyful circumstance that it is so. It is the tacit consent of Christendom to our favourite maxim, that the gospel is a simple thing ; it shows the folly and inconsistency of vehement outcries against heretics ; for it assures us, that time will bring differing good men into fellowship, and that present distinctions shall be no wall of partition in heaven.

[The following "Lines suggested by a visit to the tomb of the late Rev. Samuel Cary in the Burial-ground belonging to the Unitarian Church at Hackney," are from the *Monthly Repository*, a British Unitarian publication. To those of our patrons in whose minds they revive the image of the respected pastor or friend, they will probably have a value independent of any poetical merit.]

Cary ! to bid thy native shores adieu,
In distant lands to find a mortal's doom :
The plaintive tale shall Pity oft renew,
As sad, she lingers near the stranger's tomb.
And oft the love, that vainly strove to save
A life so dear, by meddling memory led,
Shall pass, in thought, the vast Atlantic wave,
Where Fancy paints these dwellings of the dead.
Nor clos'd thy day by fondest cares unblest,
Nor meets thy corse the angry bigot's scorn ;
Midst scenes that Priestley loved, thy ashes rest,
And wait, in hope, the promised rising morn.

J. T. R.

REVIEW.



ARTICLE I.

A Vindication of certain Passages in the common English version of the New Testament, addressed to Granville Sharp, Esq. author of the "Remarks on the uses of the Definitive article in the Greek New Testament." By the Rev. CALVIN WINSTANLEY, A. M. Cambridge, Hilliard & Metcalf, 1819. 8vo. pp. 55.

THIS able little work, which we are glad to see republished amongst us, is designed to vindicate the correctness of the translation of a few verses in the New Testament, from a proposed amendment of Granville Sharp, who insists that they should be so rendered as to declare Jesus to be God. This gentleman, in the year 1798, published what he thought he had discovered to be rules in the use of the Greek article, according to which he asserted, that, in the texts in question, the writers designed, instead of a *distinction* between God and Christ, to intimate that they are the same being. By the establishment of these rules it was thought that an unanswerable argument was obtained in favour of the doctrine of the trinity; and the exultation with which they were hailed, may not unfairly be supposed to indicate a conscious weakness in the old arguments. And it must be acknowledged in truth, that if the rules and their application were unquestionable, a strength is gained to the other presumptive proofs by which that doctrine is supported; and therefore, however it might seem, at first thought, rather astonishing and incredible that a fundamental doctrine of divine revelation should depend for one of its most plausible supports on a grammatical nicety, which lay almost unregarded and unapplied till the close of the eighteenth century—and that the apostles, natives of Judea, who are known and acknowledged to have written by no means in classical Greek, should be perfect adepts in the use of a particle, which in all languages is a matter of great delicacy—notwithstanding this, we say, yet, since the assertion has been confidently made and pertinaciously persisted in,—so that many trinitarians even in their sermons and other publications for the mass of the people, have not hesitated to say, that the

common version is altogether unfaithful, that these texts DEMAND another rendering—therefore, we cannot but esteem it a duty, in all who have the ability, to give the question a fair examination. Such an examination may be made without great difficulty, and will satisfy any candid mind, that the argument cannot be insisted upon; that the rule is liable to so many exceptions and limitations, that it is impossible to argue from it in any given case, without taking into view other circumstances, and considerations of a wholly different nature.

It is not our design to enter into any discussion of this subject, but simply to recommend to those, who are desirous of being satisfied in regard to it, the tract of Winstanley, which is now easily to be obtained; and which not only examines and refutes the argument with learning and skill, but, what may be of weight with some, was written by a Trinitarian, who had every motive to wish to find it true.

An appendix follows, containing a brief, but very lucid and acute examination of Middleton's doctrines upon this subject, and some extracts from the remarks of the Monthly Review upon Middleton's work. The whole will well repay a careful perusal, and be found satisfactory to the inquiring scholar.

ARTICLE II.

A Sketch of my Friend's Family, intended to suggest some practical hints on Religion and Domestic Manners. By MRS. MARSHALL, Author of *Henwick Tales*.

"In every work, regard the Writer's end."

Boston: Charles Ewer, 1819.

THIS is a pleasant book, and, we think, well calculated to do good. Its object is sufficiently made known by the title page, and is accomplished by the account of a gentleman's short visit to the family of a friend, in which he finds religion the handmaid of order, cheerfulness and happiness, and diffusing a charm over all the intercourse of a delightful circle. The mistress of the house, Mrs. Clifford, is an accomplished woman, of fine understanding and cultivated taste, who attends to the education of her own children, and makes her accomplishments and piety work together for their improvement. She is a sober, rational, and consistent christian; and being blessed with a husband of similar views, tastes, and feelings, is enabled to render all the arrangements of her household subject to the great principles

of duty and conscience. We might perhaps make reasonable objections to some of their notions respecting the discipline of children, and might say that his conversation with them is not always the most discreet; especially in one remarkable instance, near the commencement of the book, in which he talks in a very strange and bewildering style about total depravity, with the intention of persuading his daughter—"a sweet girl of fifteen years old"—that "she is by nature a child of wrath even as others;" with one or two other similar misapplications of scripture language. This, however, is the only passage of the kind in the work; all the rest, with the exception of a few insulated phrases, is quite innocent and inoffensive, and for the most part very judicious. And the dialogue just alluded to appears to have been written merely to unburden the author's conscience, by declaring that she was sound in that article of the faith; and as there is nothing more of it, we presume it to have been inserted from a mistaken sense of duty contrary to her better judgment. Indeed she has no great zeal for the doctrine; for she makes Mr. Clifford abandon it as soon as possible, and speak of human nature and human duty in a strain of sober good sense, utterly inconsistent with it. If our readers are not too much displeased with this commencement of the book to go on, they may find an antidote in the following sentence. Mr. Clifford had just spoken of the happy death of a friend.

" 'You mean, I suppose,' said I, 'that Arthur before his death, had the same views of religion, as you have.' 'My dear Bentley,' he answered, with the earnestness of one, who feels it to be important that he should be rightly understood; 'it is in vain to talk of *views* and *sentiments* in religion. I will venture to affirm, that the religion which goes no farther, is little better than *practical atheism*.' "

There is a fine scene exemplifying *religious dissipation*, which cannot fail to gratify and instruct our readers, and therefore we quote it entire.

"We had not risen from the breakfast-table one morning, when a female, rather young, and fashionably dressed, entered the room. After a few common place civilities she turned to Mrs. Clifford, saying, 'I called to tell you that Mr. S—— is in town, he preaches to-day at ——, and you must positively put on your things, and go with me to hear him.' 'Could I consistently do so,' replied her friend, 'I should be very happy to accompany you; but, excuse me if I say, that were this excellent man to see the dear little group by which I am surrounded, he would be the first to forbid my leaving them to listen to his sermon.'

"Perhaps the conscious recollection of some duty unperformed at home, just then stung the feelings of our fair devotee; or it might be purely a misguided zeal, which reddened on her cheek, as she retorted somewhat sharply, 'When, like Martha's, the heart is careful and troubled about many things, it is easy to find a pretext of duty to prevent our listening to the words of Jesus.'

"Mrs. Clifford mildly answered, 'I hope I am aware of this plausible deception, but in the present instance I am not conscious of meriting the rebuke. You may remember, my dear Mrs. Hammond, that Martha was not censured for a necessary attention to her *ordinary* and relative duties; but for an undue anxiety, an ostentatious and ill-timed desire of providing "things, more than hospitably good." Perhaps too, I may remind you that there subsists a visible difference between her neglecting to hear the words of the Redeemer, when he honoured her roof with his sacred presence, and my declining to attend the discourse of one of his servants, when such an attendance would necessarily involve a neglect of duties, more strictly enjoined upon me.' 'You have always a great deal to say about *duties*, my dear,' resumed the lady; 'but if I read my bible aright, no duties are so acceptable with God, as an affectionate reception of his gospel, and a desire to see his kingdom advanced in our own hearts, and in the world around us.' She then magnanimously declared her resolution 'to persist in her attachment to the "word preached," although it continued to expose her to many domestic sacrifices and involved her in several petty persecutions.'

"I believe Mrs. Clifford could have evinced to her fair friend, that she had *not* 'read her bible aright;' but as a spirit of recrimination certainly was not the temper by which she sought to maintain the honour of religion, she thought it better to drop the subject, than to expose her visitor to the imminent risk of losing her temper.

"A short silence therefore ensued, till Mr. Clifford inquired of Mrs. Hammond, 'Whether she had yet had an opportunity of visiting the sick woman, whose case he recommended to her?' 'No, really,' she replied, 'I have not had one moment of leisure since you named her to me. On Monday, I was at a bible society's meeting; Tuesday, I went to hear Mr. ——— preach; Wednesday, I dined at Mrs. Nelson's, where a select number of serious friends were assembled to meet the Rev. Mr. H———; all Thursday I was occupied in endeavouring to procure subscribers to our Dorcas society; and to-day I shall hardly have time to swallow my dinner, on my return home, before the arrival of a lady, who has promised to go with me to hear a sermon for the benefit of our Sunday school.'

"As Mrs. Hammond paused, I asked my friend, in a low voice, 'Is it possible to be *religiously dissipated*?' 'I fear it is a *possible*, though not, I should hope, a very frequent case,' he observed; then turning to the lady who had given birth to the supposition, he said, 'As your engagements are already so numerous, I fear your intended charity will come too late for poor Susan. Our Emma saw her on Wednesday, she was then almost incapable of receiving any nour-

ishment; and I believe, that in a few days, her sufferings and her wants will cease.

"If I mistake not, Mr. Clifford designed to convey a practical reproof to this 'wandering star,' and perhaps for a moment it was felt as such; but soon the salutary effects of her regret evaporated in extravagant expressions of sorrow." "Surely," she exclaimed, "there never was so unfortunate a being before. I would have made any sacrifices rather than have lost the opportunity of hearing the dying language of this poor but pious creature!" Then addressing Emma, "How I envy you, Miss Clifford; it must be a sweet satisfaction, to reflect on the many hours which, for this year past, you have spent in reading to the aged sufferer. Perhaps, my dear, you will write a short narrative of her; it would be a charming obituary; send it to me when it is drawn up, and I will get it published next month. Don't you think it would be very interesting, Mrs. Clifford?" she continued, turning to her, before she had given Emma time to reply.

"Emma bit her lips, to prevent a smile, though the mention of Susan's name at other times, might more easily have drawn a tear to her eyes.

"Mrs. Clifford replied, 'to us, who have so long witnessed her patient sufferings, every circumstance of Susan's death would be highly interesting; but I doubt whether it would be equally so to the public eye. I agree with you, however, in thinking that Emma has been highly privileged in reading to her from that sacred volume, which has furnished the comfort and support of a long life. In witnessing the triumph of a faith like Susan's, at once so humble and so strong, she has enjoyed an opportunity of instruction, which may never again occur, and which, I trust, she will not fail to improve.' "

"The clock now struck nine, and our morning visitor, starting from her seat, took a hasty leave, alleging, that she had a long way to walk, and must be there by ten o'clock, for if she were not in time for the prayer, she should have to stand all sermon time, as it would be impossible to obtain a seat afterwards." p. 64—71.

We wish we had room for the domestic character of this fair devotee; and also for the fine description of Henry Talbot's wife, and the admirable contrast of Mr. Lindsey, the austere religionist, with Mr. Clifford, and the romantic sentimental religion of Olivia, and the touching story of Algernon and Vincent. But for all these, as well as for the interesting history of Mrs. Clifford's first religious impressions, we must refer to the book itself. We do not say that it is faultless; there are some things, especially some modes of expression, which sin against pure sentiment and pure taste; but upon the whole, we think it will be read with pleasure, and we know not why it may not be read with improvement.

ARTICLE III.

A General view of the Doctrines of Christianity, designed more especially for the edification and instruction of Families. Boston, 1809.

THE work, of which we have prefixed the title to this article, was published several years ago, and has been read by many among us with pleasure and profit. But it is not known as widely as it should be, and we wish to call to it the notice which it merits. It is not an original work, but was compiled chiefly from the writings of Rev. Robert Fellowes, whose name is probably known to most of our readers. The title we think not altogether happy, because it raises an expectation which the book does not answer. We should expect from it a regular statement of the great truths of our religion; but we find, what at present is perhaps as useful, a vindication of christianity from the gross and dangerous error, which Calvinism has laboured to identify with this divine system. This may easily be supposed from the table of contents. The book professes to treat of the following subjects:—The nature of religion and the mistakes that occur on that subject; the free-agency and accountableness of man; the fall of Adam, and original sin; the doctrine of faith in general, and of religious faith in particular; the doctrine of works; the doctrine of regeneration; the doctrine of repentance; the doctrine of grace; the doctrine of election and reprobation; the doctrine of perseverance; the visiting of the iniquities of the fathers upon the children; and the sin against the Holy Ghost.—To those who are acquainted with the five thorny points of Calvinism, the design of this compilation will be sufficiently understood from the enumeration of topics now given; and few designs are more praise-worthy, than to free christianity from the reproach brought upon it by that system.

The work under review is professedly popular in its style and mode of discussion. It has little refined and elaborate reasoning, but appeals to the great moral principles of human nature, and to the general strain of the scriptures. It expresses strongly and without circumlocution the abhorrence with which every mind, uncorrupted by false theology, must look on Calvinism; and although some of its delineations may be overcharged, yet they are substantially correct; and their strength is their excellence. The truth is, that nothing is so necessary on this subject as to awaken moral feeling in men's breasts. Calvinism owes its perpetuity to a torpid, palsied state of the

moral nature. Men's minds and consciences are subdued by terror, so that they dare not confess, even to themselves, the shrinking, which they feel, from the unworthy views which this system gives of God; and by thus smothering their just abhorrence, they gradually extinguish it, and even come to vindicate in God what would disgrace his creatures. A voice of power and solemn warning is needed to rouse them from this lethargy, to give them a new and a juster dread, the dread of incurring God's displeasure, by making him odious, and exposing religion to insult and aversion.

This book will probably be objected to by theologians, because it takes no notice of a notable distinction, invented by Calvinistic metaphysicians, for rescuing their doctrines from the charge of aspersing God's equity and goodness. We refer to the distinction between *natural* and *moral inability*, a subtlety which may be thought to deserve some attention, because it makes such a show in some of the principal books of this sect. But with due deference to its defenders, it seems to us groundless and idle, a distinction without a difference. An inability to do our duty, which is *born* with us, is to all intents and according to the established meaning of the word, *natural*. Call it moral, or what you please, it is still a part of the nature which our Creator gave us, and to suppose that he punishes us for it, because it is an inability seated in the will, is just as absurd and impious, as to suppose him to punish us for a weakness of sight or of a limb. Common people cannot understand this distinction, cannot split this hair; and it is no small objection to Calvinism, that, according to its ablest defenders, it can only be reconciled to God's perfections, by a metaphysical subtlety, which the mass of people cannot comprehend. The passing over of this distinction without notice in the book before us, will expose its phraseology to charges of inaccuracy by Calvinists. But it is substantially correct, and it represents Calvinism, if not as its cautious advocates prefer to exhibit it, yet in the main such as it exists in the minds of its disciples.

If we were to speak as critics of the style of this book, we should say, that whilst generally clear, and sometimes striking, it has the faults of the style which was very current about fifteen or twenty years ago, and which we rejoice to say, is giving place to a better. The style to which we refer, and which threatened to supplant good writing in this country, *intended* to be elegant, but fell into jejuneness and insipidity. It delighted in words and arrangements of words, which were little soiled by common use, and mistook a spruce neatness for grace. We had a Procrustes' bed for sentences, and

there seemed to be a settled war between the style of writing and the free style of conversation. Times we think have changed, and a refreshing change it is. Men have learned more to write as they speak, and are ashamed to dress up familiar thoughts, as if they were just arrived from a far country, and could not appear in public without a foreign and studied attire. They have learned, that common words are common, precisely because most fitted to express real feeling and strong conception, and that the circuitous, measured phraseology, which was called elegance, was but the parade of weakness. They have learned that words are the signs of thought, and worthless counterfeits without it, and that style is good, when instead of being cast into a mould, it seems a free and natural expression of thought, and gives to us with power the workings of the author's mind.

We have been led to make these remarks on the style which in a degree marks the book before us, and which has infected many books manufactured in our own country, not because we love to play the critic, but from a persuasion that this mode of writing, has been particularly injurious to religion, and to rational religion. It has crept into sermons perhaps more than into any other compositions, and has imbued them with that soporific quality, which they have sometimes been found to possess in an eminent degree. How many hearers have been soothed by a smooth watery flow of words, a regular chime of sentences, and elegantly rocked into repose. We are aware, that preachers, above all writers, are excusable for this style, because it is the easiest; and having too much work to do, they must do it of course in the readiest way. But we mourn the necessity, and mourn still more the effect.

It gives us great pleasure to say, that in this particular, we think we perceive an improvement taking place in this region. Preaching is becoming more direct, aims more at impression, and seeks the nearest way to men's hearts and consciences. We often hear from the pulpit strong thought in plain and strong language. It is hoped, from the state of society, that we shall not fly from one extreme to another, and degenerate into coarseness; but perhaps even this is a less evil than tameness and insipidity.—We would here remark, though it is a digression from our main point, that we cannot but ascribe in part the improved style of preaching among us, to the general conviction which now prevails among Unitarian ministers, that they owe it to the cause of truth and christianity, to express as distinctly as possible their peculiar views of religion. Formerly their regard to the peace of the churches, and their deference to the feelings of respected individuals, led them to insist almost

exclusively on the generally received doctrines of christianity, and to communicate their distinguishing sentiments in general language, without contrasting them with opposite opinions; and the consequence was, a vague, indefinite style, with little point and emphasis. We esteem it a cause of gratitude to God, that they have felt it their duty to cast away these generalities, to place the great truths which are committed to them, in the broadest and brightest light of heaven, and to challenge for them the homage which is their due; and the consequence, we think, is, that they preach with greater directness and power, and to this we are in part to ascribe the progress of uncorrupted christianity. This is one of the many happy effects of the late conflict in the religious world, and is a new demonstration of the providence of Him who bringeth good from evil.

To return; the principal argument against Calvinism in the "General View of Christian doctrines" is the *Moral argument*, or that which is drawn from the inconsistency of the system with the divine perfections. It is plain that a doctrine which contradicts our best ideas of goodness and justice, cannot come from the just and good God, or be a true representation of his character. This moral argument has always been powerful to the pulling down of the strong holds of Calvinism. Even in the dark period, when this system was shaped and finished at Geneva, its advocates often writhed under the weight of it, and we cannot but deem it a mark of the progress of society, that Calvinists are more and more troubled with the palpable repugnance of their doctrines to God's nature, and accordingly labour to soften and explain them, until in many cases the name only is retained. If the stern reformer of Geneva could lift up his head, and hear the mitigated tone in which some of his professed followers dispense his fearful doctrines, we fear, that he could not lie down in peace, until he had poured out some of the maledictions which he exhausted on Servetus, on their cowardice and degeneracy. He would tell them with a frown, that *moderate Calvinism* was a solecism, a contradiction in terms, and would bid them in scorn to join their real friend, Arminius. Such is the power of public opinion and of an improved state of society on creeds, that naked, undisguised Calvinism is not very fond of showing itself, and many of consequence know imperfectly what it means. What then is the system against which the "View of Christian doctrines" is directed?

Calvinism teaches, that in consequence of Adam's sin in eating the forbidden fruit, God brings into life all his posterity with a nature wholly corrupt, so that they are utterly indisposed,

disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually. It teaches, that all mankind, having fallen in Adam, are under God's wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. It teaches, that from this ruined race God has elected a certain number to be saved by Christ, not induced to this choice by any foresight of their faith or good works, but wholly by his free grace and love, and that having thus predestinated them to eternal life, he renews and sanctifies them by his almighty and irresistible agency, and brings them into a state of grace, from which they cannot fall and perish. It teaches, that the rest of mankind he is pleased to pass over, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sins, to the honour of his vindictive justice ; in other words, he leaves the rest to the corruption in which they were born, withholds the grace which is necessary to their recovery, and condemns them to "most grievous torments in soul and body without intermission in hell fire forever." Such is Calvinism, as gathered from the most authentic records of the doctrine. Whoever will consult the famous Assembly's catechisms and confession, will see the system in all its length and breadth of deformity. A man of plain sense, whose spirit has not been broken to this creed by education or terrour, will think that it is not necessary for us to travel to heathen countries, to learn how mournfully the human mind may misrepresent the Deity.

The *moral argument* against Calvinism, of which we have spoken, must seem irresistible to common and unperverted minds, after attending to the brief statement now given. It will be asked with astonishment, How is it possible that men can hold these doctrines and yet maintain God's goodness and equity ? What principles can be more contradictory ?—To remove the objection to Calvinism, which is drawn from its repugnance to the divine perfections, recourse has been had, as before observed, to the distinction between natural and moral inability, and to other like subtleties. But the most common, popular, and successful mode of evading it we conceive to be this. Calvinists generally will acknowledge without hesitation, that their doctrine labours under difficulties, that it does *seem* to oppose our convictions of rectitude ; but they add, that *apparent* are not always *real* inconsistencies ; that God is an infinite and incomprehensible being, and not to be tried by *our* ideas of fitness and morality ; that we bring their system to an incompetent tribunal, when we submit it to the decision of human reason and conscience ; that we are weak judges of what is right and wrong, good and evil in the Deity ; that the happiness of the universe may require an ad-

ministration of human affairs which is very offensive to limited understandings; that we must follow revelation, not reason or moral feeling, and must consider doctrines, which shock us in revelation, as awful mysteries, which are dark through our ignorance, and which time will enlighten. How little, it is added, can man explain or understand God's ways. How inconsistent the miseries of life appear with goodness in the creator. How prone too have men always been to confound good and evil, to call the just, unjust. How presumptuous is it in such a being, to sit in judgment upon God, and to question the rectitude of the divine administration, because it shocks *his* sense of rectitude! Such we conceive to be a fair statement of the manner in which the Calvinist most frequently meets the objection, that his system is at war with God's attributes. Such the reasoning by which the voice of conscience and nature is stifled, and men are reconciled to doctrines, which, if tried by the established principles of morality, would be rejected as blasphemies. On this reasoning we purpose to offer some remarks; and we shall avail ourselves of the opportunity, to give our views of the confidence which is due to our rational and moral faculties in religion.

That God is infinite, and that man often errs, we affirm as strongly as our Calvinistic brethren. We desire to think humbly of ourselves, and reverently of our creator. In the strong language of scripture, "We now see through a glass darkly." "We cannot by searching find out God unto perfection? Clouds and darkness are round about him, His judgments are a great deep." God is great and good beyond utterance or thought. We have no disposition to idolize our own powers, or to penetrate the secret counsels of the Deity. But on the other hand, we think it ungrateful to disparage the powers which our Creator has given us, or to question the certainty or importance of the knowledge which he has seen fit to place within our reach. There is an affected humility, we think, as dangerous as pride. We may rate our faculties too meanly, as well as too boastingly. The worst error in religion after all, is that of the Sceptic, who records triumphantly the weaknesses and wanderings of the human intellect, and maintains that no trust is due to the decisions of this erring reason. We by no means think, that man's greatest danger springs from pride of understanding, though we think as badly of this vice as other christians. The history of the church proves, that men may trust their faculties too little as well as too much, and that the timidity, which shrinks from investigation, has injured the mind, and betrayed the interests of Christianity, as much as an irreverent boldness of thought.

All religion plainly implies a confidence in, and a respect for our rational and moral powers. It implies, that we have minds endowed and qualified for the highest employments of mind, that is, for apprehending justly the moral attributes of the Creator, and for discerning their proper signs, expressions and effects. It implies and requires capacities which assimilate us to the Divinity. Nothing is gained to piety by degrading human nature, for in the competency of this nature to know and judge of God all piety has its foundation. Our proneness to err instructs us to use our powers with caution, not to condemn and neglect them. The occasional abuse of our faculties does not prove them unfit for their highest end, which is, to form clear and consistent views of God. Because our eyes sometimes fail or deceive us, would a wise man pluck them out, or cover them with a bandage, and choose to walk and work in the dark? or because they cannot distinguish distant objects, can they discern nothing clearly in their proper sphere, and is sight to be pronounced a fallacious guide? Men who, to support a creed, would shake our trust in the calm, deliberate, and distinct decisions of our rational and moral powers, endanger religion more than its open foes, and forge the deadliest weapon for the infidel.

It is true that God is an infinite being, and also true, that his powers and perfections, his purposes and operations, his ends and means, being unlimited, are *incomprehensible*. In other words, they cannot be *wholly taken in or embraced* by the human mind. In the strong and figurative language of scripture, we "know nothing" of God's ways; that is, we know *very few* of them. But this is just as true of the most advanced archangel as of man. In comparison with the vastness of God's system, the range of the highest created intellect is narrow; and in this particular, man's lot does not differ from that of his elder brethren in heaven. We are both confined in our observation and experience to a little spot in the creation. But are an angel's faculties worthy of no trust, or is his knowledge uncertain, because he learns and reasons from a small part of God's works? or are his judgments respecting the Creator to be charged with presumption, because his views do not spread through the whole extent of the universe? We grant that our understandings cannot stretch beyond a very narrow sphere. But still the lessons, which we learn within this sphere, are just as sure, as if it were indefinitely enlarged. Because much is unexplored, we are not to suspect what we have actually discovered. Knowledge is not the less real, because confined. The man, who never set foot beyond his native village, knows

its scenery and inhabitants as undoubtingly, as if he had travelled to the poles. We indeed see very little ; but that little is as true, as if every thing else were seen ; and our future discoveries must agree with and support it. Should the whole order and purposes of the universe be opened to us, it is certain that nothing would be disclosed, which would in any degree shake our persuasion, that the earth is inhabited by rational and moral beings, who are authorised to expect from their creator the most benevolent and equitable government. No extent of observation can unsettle those primary and fundamental principles of moral truth, which we derive from our highest faculties operating in the relations in which God has fixed us. In every region and period of the universe, it will be as true as it is now on the earth, that knowledge and power are the measures of responsibility and that natural incapacity absolves from guilt. These and other moral verities, which are among our clearest perceptions, would, if possible, be strengthened, in proportion as our powers should be enlarged ; because harmony and consistency are the characters of God's administration, and all our researches into the universe only serve to manifest its unity, and to show a wider operation of the laws which we witness and experience on earth.

We grant that God is *incomprehensible*, in the sense already given. But he is not therefore *unintelligible* ; and this distinction we conceive to be important. We do not pretend to know the *whole* nature and properties of God, but still we can form some *clear ideas* of him, and can reason from these ideas as justly as from any other. The truth is, that we cannot be said to comprehend any being whatever, not the simplest plant or animal. All have hidden properties. Our knowledge of all is limited. But have we therefore no distinct ideas of the objects around us, and is all our reasoning about them unworthy of trust ? Because God is infinite, his name is not therefore a mere sound. It is a representative of some *distinct conceptions* of our creator ; and these conceptions are as sure, and important, and as proper materials for the reasoning faculty, as they would be if our views were indefinitely enlarged. We cannot indeed trace God's goodness and rectitude through the whole field of his operations ; but we know the essential nature of these attributes, and therefore can often judge what accords with and opposes them. God's goodness, because infinite, does not cease to be goodness, or essentially differ from the same attribute in man ; nor does justice change its nature, so that it cannot be understood, because it is seated in an unbounded mind. There have indeed been philosophers, "falsely so called," who

have argued from the unlimited nature of God, that we cannot ascribe to him justice and other moral attributes, in any proper or definite sense of those words ; and the inference is plain, that all religion or worship, wanting an *intelligible* object, must be a misplaced, wasted offering. This doctrine from the infidel we reject with abhorrence ; but something, not very different, too often reaches us from the mistaken christian ; who, to save his creed, shrouds the creator in utter darkness. In opposition to both, we maintain that God's attributes are intelligible, and that we can conceive as truly of his goodness and justice, as of these qualities in men. In fact, these qualities are essentially the same in God and man, though differing in degree, in purity, and in extent of operation. We know not and we cannot conceive of any *other* justice or goodness, than we learn from our own nature ; and if God have not these, he is altogether unknown to us as a moral being ; he offers nothing for esteem and love to rest upon ; the objection of the infidel is just, that worship is wasted ; " We worship we know not what. "—Is it asked, on what authority we ascribe to God goodness and rectitude, in the sense in which these attributes belong to men, or how we can judge of the nature of attributes in the mind of the creator ? We answer by asking, How it is that we become acquainted with the mind of a fellow creature ? The last is as invisible, as removed from *immediate* inspection, as the first. Still we do not hesitate to speak of the justice and goodness of a neighbour ; and how do we gain our knowledge ? We answer, by witnessing the effects, operations, and expressions of these attributes. It is a law of our nature to argue from the effect to the cause, from the action to the agent, from the ends proposed and from the means of pursuing them, to the character and disposition of the being in whom we observe them. By these processes, we learn the invisible mind and character of man ; and by the same we ascend to the mind of God, whose works, effects, operations, and ends, are as expressive and significant of justice and goodness, as the best and most decisive actions of men. If this reasoning be sound, (and all religion rests upon it,) then God's justice and goodness are intelligible attributes, agreeing essentially with the same qualities in ourselves. Their operation indeed is infinitely wider, and they are employed in accomplishing not only immediate but remote and unknown ends. Of consequence, we must expect that many parts of the divine administration will be *obscure*, that is, will not produce *immediate* good, and an *immediate* distinction between virtue and vice. But still the unbounded operation of these attributes does not change their nature. They are still

the same, as if they acted in the narrowest sphere. We can still determine in many cases what does not accord with them. We are particularly sure that those essential principles of justice, which enter into and even form our conception of this attribute, must pervade every province and every period of the administration of a just being, and that to suppose the creator in any instance to forsake them, is to charge him directly with unrighteousness, however loudly the lips may compliment his equity.

"But is it not presumptuous in man," it is continually said, "to sit in judgment on God." We answer, that to "sit in judgment on God" is an ambiguous and offensive phrase, conveying to common minds the ideas of irreverence, boldness, familiarity. The question would be better stated thus. Is it not presumptuous in man to judge concerning God, and concerning what agrees or disagrees with his attributes? We answer confidently, no: for in many cases we are competent and even bound to judge. And we plead first in our defence the scriptures. How continually does God in his word appeal to the understanding and moral judgment of man. "O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it." We observe in the next place, that all religion supposes and is built on judgments passed by us on God and on his operations. Is it not, for example, our duty and a leading part of piety to *praise* God? And what is praising a being, but to adjudge and ascribe to him just and generous deeds and motives? And of what value is praise, except from those, who are capable of *distinguishing* between actions which exalt, and actions which degrade the character? Is it presumption to call God *excellent*? And what is this, but to refer his character to a standard of excellence, to try it by the established principles of rectitude, and to pronounce its conformity to them? that is, to judge of God and his operations?

We are presumptuous, we are told, in judging of our creator. But he himself has made this our duty, in giving us a moral faculty; and to decline it, is to violate the primary law of our nature. Conscience, the sense of right, the power of perceiving moral distinctions, the power of discerning between justice and injustice, excellence and baseness, is the the highest faculty given us by God, the whole foundation of our responsibility, and our sole capacity for religion. Now we are *forbidden* by this faculty to love a being, who wants, or who fails to discover, moral excellence. God, in giving us conscience, has

implanted a principle within us, which *forbids* us to prostrate ourselves before mere power, or to offer praise where we do not discover worth; a principle, which challenges our supreme homage for *supreme goodness*, and which absolves us from guilt, when we abhor a severe and unjust administration. Our Creator has consequently *waived* his own claims on our veneration and obedience, any farther than he discovers himself to us in characters of benevolence, equity, and righteousness. He rests his authority on the perfect coincidence of his will and government with those great and fundamental principles of morality written on our souls. He desires no worship, but that which springs from the exercise of our moral faculties upon his character, from our discernment and persuasion of his rectitude and goodness. He asks, he accepts, no love or admiration but from those, who can understand the nature and the proofs of moral excellence.

There are two or three striking facts, which show that there is no presumption in judging of God, and of what agrees or disagrees with his attributes. The first fact is, that the most intelligent and devout men have often employed themselves in *proving* the existence and perfections of God, and have been honoured for this service to the cause of religion. Now we ask, what is meant by the *proofs* of a divine perfection? They are certain acts, operations, and methods of government, which are *proper and natural effects, signs, and expressions* of this perfection, and from which, according to the established principles of reasoning, it may be inferred. To prove the divine attributes is to collect and arrange those works and ways of the creator, which *accord with* these attributes, correspond to them, flow from them, and express them. Of consequence, to prove them requires and implies *the power of judging of what agrees with them*, of discerning their proper marks and expressions. All our treatises on natural theology rest on this power. Every argument in support of a divine perfection is an exercise of it. To deny it is to overthrow all religion.

Now if such are the proofs of God's goodness and justice, and if we are capable of discerning them, then we are *not* necessarily presumptuous, when we say of particular measures ascribed to him, that they are *inconsistent* with his attributes, and cannot belong to him. There is plainly no more presumption in affirming of certain principles of administration, that they *oppose* God's equity and would prove him unrighteous, than to affirm of others, that they prove him upright and good. There are signs and evidences of injustice as unequivocal as those of

justice; and our faculties are as adequate to the perception of the last as of the first. If they must not be trusted in deciding what would prove God unjust, they are unworthy of confidence when they gather evidences of his rectitude; and of course, the whole structure of religion must fall.

It is no slight objection to the mode of reasoning adopted by the Calvinist, that it renders the proof of the divine attributes impossible. When we object to his representations of the divine government, that they shock our clearest ideas of goodness and justice, he replies, that still they may be true, because we know very little of God, and what *seems* unjust to man may be in the creator the perfection of rectitude. Now this weapon has a double edge. If the strongest marks and expressions of injustice do not prove God unjust, then the strongest marks of the opposite character do not prove him righteous. If the first do not deserve confidence, because of our narrow views of God, neither do the last. If, when more shall be known, the first may be found consistent with perfect rectitude, so, when more shall be known, the last may be found consistent with infinite malignity and oppression. This reasoning of our opponents casts us on an ocean of awful uncertainty. Admit it, and we have no proofs of God's goodness and equity to rely upon. What we call *proofs*, may be mere *appearances*, which a wider knowledge of God may reverse. The future may shew us, that the very laws and works of the creator, from which we now infer his kindness, are consistent with the most determined purpose to spread infinite misery and guilt, and were intended, by raising hope, to add the agony of disappointment to our other woes. Why may not these anticipations, horrible as they are, be verified by the unfolding of God's system, if our reasonings about his attributes are rendered so very uncertain, as Calvinism teaches, by the infinity of his nature?

We have mentioned one fact to shew that it is not presumptuous to judge of God, and of what accords with and opposes his attributes, namely, the fact that his attributes are thought susceptible of *proof*. Another fact, very decisive on this point, is, that christians of all classes have concurred in resting the truth of christianity in a great degree on its *internal* evidence, that is, on its accordance with the perfections of God. How common is it to hear from religious teachers, that christianity is *worthy* of a good and righteous being, that it bears the marks of a divine original. Volumes have been written on its internal proofs, on the coincidence of its purposes and spirit with our highest conceptions of God.

How common too is it, to say of other religions, that they are *at war* with the divine nature, with God's rectitude and goodness, and that we want no other proofs of their falsehood. And what does all this reasoning imply? Clearly this, that we are capable of determining, in many cases, what is worthy and what is unworthy of God, what accords with and what opposes his moral attributes. Deny us this capacity, and it would be no presumption against a professed revelation, that it ascribed to the Supreme being the most detestable practices. It might still be said in support of such a system, that it is arrogant in man to determine what kind of revelation suits the character of the Creator. Christianity then leans, at least in part, and some think chiefly, on internal evidence, or on its agreeableness to God's moral attributes; and is it probable, that this religion, having this foundation, contains representations of God's government which shock our ideas of rectitude? and that it silences our objections by telling us, that we are no judges of what suits or opposes his infinite nature?

We will name one more fact to shew, that it is not presumptuous to form these judgments of the Creator. All christians are accustomed to reason from God's attributes, and to use them as tests of doctrines. In their controversies with one another, they spare no pains to shew, that their particular views accord best with the divine perfections, and every sect labours to throw on its adversaries the odium of maintaining what is unworthy of God. Theological writings are filled with such arguments; and yet *we*, it seems, are guilty of awful presumption, when we deny of God principles of administration, against which every pure and good sentiment in our breasts rises in abhorrence.

We shall conclude this discussion with an important inquiry. If God's justice and goodness are consistent with those operations and modes of government, which Calvinism ascribes to him, of what use is our belief in these perfections? What expectations can we found upon them? If it consist with divine rectitude to consign to everlasting misery, beings, who have come guilty and impotent from his hand, we beg to know what interest we have in this rectitude, what pledge of good it contains, or what evil can be imagined which may not be its natural result? If justice and goodness, when stretched to infinity, take such strange forms and appear in such unexpected and apparently inconsistent operations, how are we sure, that they will not give up the best men to ruin, and leave the universe to the powers of darkness? Such results indeed seem incompatible with these attributes, but not more so than the acts

attributed to God by Calvinism. Is it said, that the divine faithfulness is pledged in the scriptures to a happier issue of things? But why should not divine faithfulness *transcend* our poor understandings as much as divine goodness and justice, and why may not God, consistently with this attribute, crush every hope which his word has raised? Thus all the divine perfections are lost to us as grounds of encouragement and consolation, if we maintain, that their infinity places them beyond our judgment, and that we must expect from them measures and operations entirely opposed to what seems to us most accordant with their nature.

We have thus endeavoured to shew that the testimony of our rational and moral faculties against Calvinism, is worthy of trust.—We know that this reasoning will be met by the question, What then becomes of Christianity? for this religion plainly teaches the doctrines you have condemned. Our answer is ready. Christianity contains no such doctrines. Christianity, reason, and conscience are perfectly harmonious on the subject under discussion. Our religion, fairly construed, gives no countenance to that system, which has arrogated to itself the distinction of Evangelical. We cannot, however, enter this field at present. We hope to state on a future occasion the testimony of scripture on these points, fully and minutely. At present, we will only say that the *general* spirit of christianity affords a very strong presumption, that its records teach no such doctrines as we have opposed. This spirit is love, charity, benevolence. Christianity, we all agree, is designed to manifest God as *perfect benevolence*, and to bring men to love and imitate him. Now is it probable, that a religion, having this object, gives views of the supreme being, from which our moral convictions, and benevolent sentiments shrink with horror, and which if made our pattern, would convert us into monsters! It is plain that were a human parent to form himself on the universal Father, as described by Calvinism, that is, were he to bring his children into life totally depraved, and then to pursue them with endless punishment, we should charge him with a profligacy unequalled in the annals of Newgate; or were a sovereign to incapacitate his subjects *in any way whatever* for obeying his laws, and then to torture them in dungeons of perpetual woe, we should say, that the blackest crimes of history grow fair and white by the side of this. And is it probable, that a religion, which aims to attract and assimilate us to God, considered as love, should hold him up to us in these heart withering characters? We may confidently expect to

find in such a system the brightest views of the divine nature ; and the same objections lie against interpretations of its records, which savour strongly of cruelty and injustice, as lie against the literal sense of passages which ascribe to God bodily wants and organs. Let the scriptures be read with a recollection of the spirit of christianity, and with that modification of particular texts by this general spirit, which a just criticism requires, and Calvinism would no more enter the mind of the reader, than popery, we had almost said, than heathenism.

In the remarks now made, it will be seen, we hope, that we have aimed to expose doctrines, not to condemn their professors. It is true, that men are apt to think themselves assailed, when their system only is called to account. But we have no foe but error. In many Calvinists we see with pleasure a confirmation of the remark, that men may be better than their creeds. Their characters are formed much more on the broad and acknowledged principles of the gospel, than on the peculiarities of the sect. In fact, a large number, perhaps a majority of those, who surname themselves with the name of Calvin, have little more title to it than ourselves. They keep the name, and drop the principles which it signifies. They adhere to the system as a whole, but shrink from all its parts and distinguishing points. This silent but real defection from Calvinism is spreading more and more widely. The grim features of this system are softening, and its stern spirit yielding to conciliation and charity. With these views, we have little disposition to reproach those who nominally espouse it, although we believe that its influence is yet so extensive and pernicious as to bind us to oppose it.

Calvinism, we are persuaded, is giving place to better views. It has passed its meridian, and is sinking, to rise no more. It has to contend with foes more formidable than theologians, with foes, from whom it cannot shield itself in mystery and metaphysical subtleties, we mean with the progress of the human mind, and with the progress of the spirit of the gospel. Society is going forward in intelligence and charity, and of course is leaving the theology of the sixteenth century behind it. We hail this revolution of opinion as the most auspicious event to the christian cause. We hear much at present of efforts to spread the gospel. But christianity is gaining more by the removal of degrading errors, than it would by armies of missionaries who should carry with them a corrupted form of the religion. We think the decline of Calvinism one of the most promising facts in our passing history ; for this system, by

outraging conscience and reason, tends to array these high faculties against revelation. Its errors are peculiarly mournful, because they relate to the character of God. It darkens, stains, pollutes his pure nature ; spoils his character of its sacredness, loveliness, glory, beauty ; and thus quenches the central light of the universe, makes existence a curse, and the extinction of it a consummation devoutly to be wished. We now speak of the *peculiarities* of this system, and of their natural influence, when not counteracted, as in some degree they always are, by better views, derived from the spirit and plain lessons of christianity.

We have had so much to do with our subject, that we have neglected to pay the usual compliment to the work we proposed to review, by giving extracts from it. This we could do to our own satisfaction and that of our readers. But our limits forbid. We recommend it to perusal, believing that it will give many just views of God and of religion, and will fortify the mind against pernicious errors. Like all human books, it must be read with discrimination. We earnestly wish, that a work, answering to the title of this, which should give us "a general view of christian doctrines" in their natural order and simplicity, might be undertaken by an able hand. Next to a good commentary on the scriptures, it would be the best service which could be rendered to christian truth.

INTELLIGENCE.

Plan of Dr. Spencer's Institution in Bristol, for acquiring and communicating an accurate and critical Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, without Expense.

THE principles on which this Institution is founded, are the following :—

First. That which a person is competent to learn, if he be properly instructed, he will be able to teach.

Secondly. When a student has made a certain progress in learning any thing, it will be highly conducive to his improvement to begin to teach it.

Thirdly. Persons in a class of four, upon Dr. Spencer's plan of teaching, will learn more easily and expeditiously than individually.

Fourthly. It is much more pleasant and easy to teach four students in a class than one alone.

Lastly. It is thought to be much more agreeable to the nature of the spiritual and heavenly kingdom of Jesus Christ, his own example, and that of his apostles, that the gospel should be taught freely, than that it should be taught for worldly honours and worldly emoluments.

Every student is gratuitously taught, in a class of four, to become a teacher of four other students, and a superintendant of four classes, consisting of sixteen students and four teaching-students.

Every student engages to instruct four other students upon the same free terms on which he himself receives instruction.

As the teachers and superintendants receive no emolument for their instructions, so none are encouraged to become students, who have not the probable means of supporting themselves and families by their fortunes, professions, or trades. As this is an institution for adults, persons do not become students until they are twenty-one years of age. The institution is open to christians of every denomination, who have received a good English education, and who have sufficient health, mental ability, inclination, perseverance, and time, to enter into it. The time devoted to study is only one hour each day, from seven o'clock in the evening to eight in the winter, and from eight to nine in the summer. Common abilities only are necessary, but very much depends on inclination and perseverance: by which, things almost incredible may be easily effected.

The whole time for learning and teaching is divided into three equal parts. During the first part, persons are students only; during the second, teaching-students; and during the third, teachers and superintendants.

For the first two years the students are taught their own language grammatically, the elements of Rhetoric, Logic, the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the Greek of the Septuagint translation and of the New Testament. During the next two years, the students become teaching-students, and for one hour every other day, instruct their students in English Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Hebrew, and Greek; while for one hour every other day, they are taught what is farther necessary to enable them to read well and explain clearly the Holy Scriptures; namely, the geography and natural history of the countries where the Scriptures were written; the history of the four great empires with which the Jews were connected; the customs of the Jews and other Eastern nations; Christian ecclesi-

astical history, &c. &c. The composing of sermons has no place in this institution, because such compositions as are now called by that name, were never delivered by Jesus Christ, his apostles, or by the Christian teachers of the first two centuries—because they are much better calculated to support the peculiar opinions of a party, and to divide the Christian church, than to explain the Holy Scriptures; and further, because it is thought no rational man would ever adopt such a method to make people well acquainted with the contents of any other book. The teaching-students, having at the end of four years completed their course of studies, for two years more teach their students, what they themselves have learned during the last two years of their own education.

The business of the superintendants is to see that the students, teaching-students, and teachers, properly fulfil their respective engagements; to assist by their advice and counsel, and to preside when four classes meet together for prayer, reading, and explaining the Holy Scriptures.

In the class of five, there are four students and one teaching student. In the class of twenty-one, there are sixteen students, four teaching students, and one teacher and superintendant. In the class of eighty five, which is denominated *the Society*, there are sixty-four students, sixteen teaching-students, four teachers, who are superintendants of twenties, and one who is superintendant of the whole society.

In the class of five, twenty minutes of the hour devoted to instruction, are employed in reverently reading the Holy Scriptures in English. The Books of Holy Scripture are read regularly, chronologically, connectedly, and, as far as we are able, without prejudice: truth and its holy influence being the only objects of the Institution.

This Institution is purely religious, and is to be kept entirely distinct from all that is political; neither asking nor accepting any privileges from the civil government. For a religious society, by accepting privileges from a state, gives that state a plausible pretext for interfering with its principles and government; and in this way, has pure Christianity been corrupted, and its corruptions are likely thus to be long continued. “*My kingdom is not of this world.*”

TO YOUNG MEN.

Are the twenty-four hours of the day so thoroughly employed, that you cannot apply one to this object?

If you have one hour to spare, can you employ it in a better way?

Will not the advantages you may derive from this Institution compensate for the time employed in it?

Do you not expect to live for ever? Will you not then devote a twenty-fourth part of your time to your own eternal interest and that of others; but the whole to the affairs of a moment? For your whole life, compared with eternity, is not so long as a moment!

Consider, that you have now an opportunity of receiving and of doing much good. See that you do not neglect it.

The following calculation shews, that if one teacher complete the education of four pupils in four years, and the four pupils shall each of them have begun the education of four other pupils at the end of two years, the education of those pupils will be finished at the end of six years; and they will have had in train sixty-four pupils, whose education will be completed at the end of eight years, and so on, till all the world might soon be instructed in the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, in the languages in which they were originally written.

Superintendant Teacher	1		
Teaching-Students	4	Years	4
Students	16		6
	64		8
	256		10
	1,024		12
	4,096		14
	16,384		16
	65,536		18
	262,144		20
	1,048,576		22
	4,194,304		24
	16,777,216		26
	67,108,864		28
	268,435,456		30
	1,073,741,824		32

[The above curious article, which, notwithstanding some strange and indefensible notions, contains valuable hints, we have extracted without alteration from the *Christian Reformer*, of September, 1817.]

Massachusetts Peace Society.—The Fourth Annual Report of this truly christian and philanthropic Society, at its anniversary in December last, has been published, and presents a prospect full of animating encouragement to the friends of humanity and religion. It opens with a summary history of its origin and success thus far.

"It is now four years since *twenty-two* brethren of different denominations gave their signatures to the Constitution of this Society. Many of them will long remember the appalling obstacles which were then presented to their minds, and the concern with which they resolved to encounter the host of prejudices in favor of war as a necessary and irremediable evil. But before the close of the year they had distributed 4820 Tracts, and the number of members had increased to 173.

In 1817 they distributed 5370 Tracts, and at the close of the year the Society comprised 304 members.

In 1818, the third year of the Society, 3298 Tracts were distributed—of which 4785 were copies of the Friend of Peace. The same year six Auxiliary or Branch Societies were formed and reported: including these, the whole number of members at the end of the year was upwards of 550.

In the course of 1819 the distribution of Tracts has amounted to 16,149—of which 7360 have been copies of the Friend of Peace.

The distribution has extended to nearly all the United States and the British Provinces in America—to Great Britain, France, and Russia in Europe,—to India, and to the Sandwich Islands.

The Society has been increased in the last year by 83 individual members and six additional Auxiliary Societies. The whole number of subscribers to the original Society is

-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	547
To the twelve Branches	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	335

Making a total of	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	882
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There are now in this country, besides the Massachusetts Peace Society, and its twelve Auxiliaries, 15 Peace Societies in the United States: one in Maine, one in Rhode Island, five in New-York, one in North Carolina, five in Ohio, and two in Indiana."

The Clergyman's Almanack.—We regret that the year opened, and we suffered the season, at which families provide themselves with Almanacks, to pass by, without recommending to our readers to purchase the *religious* almanack with the above title. It is well arranged, plain, and interesting; and answers the double purpose of a calendar and a tract. We might give many reasons on account of which all serious people should prefer to have lying on their table, and within constant reach of their children, a little book like this, filled with serious matter and wholesome instruction, rather than to have perpetually in their way the idle and useless anecdotes and jests which usually fill the pages of these pamphlets. But for the present we think it enough to invite the attention of those, to whom the recommendation does not come too late, persuaded that it may be the instrument of no small good.

OBITUARY.

Died at Raleigh, N. C. January 18th, after a lingering illness of nine months, the Rev. ANTHONY FORSTER, late Pastor of the Second Independent Church, in Charleston, S. C. The following notice of his character we have extracted partly from a Charleston publication, and partly from the manuscript of a correspondent.

Mr. Forster was a native of North-Carolina, and received his education in the University of that State. At an early period of life he entered the army, with a Lieutenant's commission, and served for some time on our southwestern frontier. After resigning his commission, he devoted himself, at first, to the study of Law. But he was not called to the bar—new views opened on his mind, which induced him to relinquish this profession, and dedicate his talents and exertions to the immediate service of the Gospel. After preaching for some time in various churches in this city and vicinity, he was elected into the Independent Church in this city, as temporary Pastor, in the room of the late Dr. Hollingshead, at that time disabled from his labors.

The most important and interesting occurrence in his ministry we cannot pass without notice. He became suspected, in the course of a few years, of heresy on those doctrines peculiarly denominated Calvinism, and was required to subscribe a confession of faith implying his assent to this system. He deemed this an unwarranted requisition; and gave to it a final answer in a masterly communication on the unscripturalness of all human forms of faith. The belief of Mr. Forster in the doctrines of the Trinity, and an atoning and vicarious sacrifice, seems at this time to have continued unshaken. It was in the anxious investigation or discussion which followed, that his active and inquiring mind first misgave him in regard to the truth of what are called these peculiar doctrines, and to the validity of the arguments he had employed in their support. The state of feeling to which this suspicion gave birth, was by no means an enviable one. In his own relation of himself, he passed whole sleepless nights, and his pillow was wet with tears. From distressing doubt and suspense, the only relief which he gained, was in a state of conviction, at first, probably, more painful still. The evidence of the opinions he had fondly devoted himself to extirpate, unfolded itself to his mind, more copious, clear and decisive; and the scales of human error were torn from his eyes. Mr. Forster's attention was first given to purify the service of his church from the offensive doxologies which had hitherto been used. It is not to be supposed, however, that this revolution in his opinions passed unregarded. The more thinking part of his congregation were probably well prepared to receive his simple views of Christianity; and the preaching of Mr. Forster was so skillful and judicious, as without doubt, to have wrought on the minds of many more. Those whose tenacity in their former faith would not permit their continuance in the society, were interchanged with that portion of the associated church, in whom Mr. Forster had produced a sympathy with himself; and the union of the two churches was dissolved.

Previously to this event, Mr. Forster, whose health had not for some years been firm, had been afflicted with a hæmorrhage of the lungs, and though he had, to appearance, regained nearly his usual health, yet his constitution had sustained a shock, from the effects of which it could never recover. In the summer of 1817, and again in that of 1818, he was induced to try the effect of a temporary suspension of his labours, and travelled to the northern and middle States. From both these excursions he returned with evident symptoms of improvement; but the flattering appearances were transient—the fatal arrow was lodged in his vitals, and its effects, though slow and treacherous, were inevitable. In February, 1819, he preached for the last time; soon after this, his weakness increased to such a degree as made it evident that his pastoral labours were closed. About the last of April, he left Charleston with his family for Raleigh, which he reached with difficulty; and there, after a long period of weakness, pain and decay, which he bore with the most exemplary fortitude, resignation and cheerfulness, he expired without a struggle or a groan.

Mr. Forster's was a mind of no ordinary cast; there was something singularly bold and original in his conceptions, the most trite and common subjects acquired from his peculiar manner of presenting them, all the interest and grace of novelty; to this it was doubtless in a great measure to be ascribed that his public discourses took generally so deep a hold on the attention of his audience. Mr. Forster had *no model*—his views were his own; though they might often be the same that others had taken before him—with him they were original and self-derived. He took his impressions of truth and duty from no man upon trust—he examined every thing for himself; it was nothing to him what had been the faith or the practice of others; he acted under an habitual and deep sense of his own personal responsibility for his opinions and his conduct; and every thing was, with him, subjected to the test of rigid and unbending principle; yet there was nothing of obstinacy, of dogmatism or self-sufficiency in his temper. No man listened with more patience or docility, to argument, from whatever quarter; no man could be more free from the folly of a pertinacious adherence to his own opinion, merely because it *was his own*. Of him, if of any man that ever lived it might safely be affirmed, that he was a sincere lover of truth, and to the pursuit of this, he devoted himself with an ardour and singleness of heart, which have seldom been equalled. Of the right of private judgment and free enquiry, in matters of faith, he was a firm and steady assertor. He considered this the fundamental and primary article in that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and no earthly considerations could induce him to concede this right, or forego its exercise for a moment; and he was as delicate and cautious of encroaching on this right in others, as he was resolute in maintaining it for himself.

As a Minister of the Gospel, his qualifications were of the highest order. His moral feelings were pure, elevated, discriminating, delicate, consistent; his piety was rational, deep, heart-felt, operative—it moulded his whole character, and gave the tone and tenor to the whole course of his life and conversation. His views of the divine character and government, were liberal, consoling and delightful; he seemed habitually to regard the Deity as the Father of the Universe, with sentiments of the deepest reverence and humility—yet joyous, confiding, filial. He delighted to contemplate in the events of life in all the minute, as well as more important concerns of men, the operations of a wise and beneficent Providence, “from seeming evil still educing good.” This contemplation was to him an unfailing source of consolation and support, in circumstances trying and afflictive, in no ordinary degree.

His public discourses were serious, practical, and impressive. He dwelt much on the peculiar character of the gospel dispensation: on the purity, excellence, consistency and practicableness of its morality; on the importance of the truths it reveals, the solemn and powerful monitions it presents, and the glorious prospect it opens to the pure and upright in heart. He strongly insisted on the necessity of vital piety and practical godliness; and the utter worthlessness of all speculations, principles, and professions, unaccompanied by these. To the commands and example of Jesus his hearers were constantly referred, for the standard of their faith, and the pattern of their conduct.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A Communication through the Post-Office, respecting “Two Articles of Professor Stuart's Creed,” has been received, but is necessarily laid by for the present.

We regret that we have not room for L. C. He will perceive that the department, in which his Communication should be inserted, has been unavoidably straitened.

“The account of the St. Thomé Christians.” “*To Farmers*.” “*Eusebia*.” shall have early attention.

“*Victor*” is received and has our thanks. We shall be glad to avail ourselves, as occasion may offer, of his hints. He may perceive from the aspect of the present number that some of his apprehensions are groundless. We do not mean to be unfaithful to our friends at home or abroad.

Several Obituary Notices are omitted for want of room.